THE GREAT IMPORTANCE OF A *RELIGIOUS LIFE* CONSIDERED:

To which are added,

SOME MORNING AND EVENING

PRAYERS.

THE FORTY-SECOND EDITION, CORRECTED.

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1821.

ADVERTISEMENT.

The honourable and very ingeniou compiler of A Catalogue of Royal an Noble Authors in England, *having as cribed the following excellent treatis to* JOHN PERCEVAL, Earl of Egmont *I think it incumbent upon me to declar in justice to the revered memory of m honoured Father, that* The Great Im portance of a Religious Life, *was writ ten by the late* WILLIAM MELMOTH *of Lincoln's-Inn, Esq. and first pub lished early in the beginning of th present century.*

W. M.

Bath, May 16
1790.

A SHORT

CHARACTER OF THE AUTHOR

OF THE FOLLOWING

TREATISE.

It may add weight perhaps to th
reflections contained in the followin
pages, to inform the reader that th
author's life was one uniform exempla
of those precepts, which, with so bene
volent a zeal, and so pathetic a sim
plicity of style he endeavours to re
commend to general practice. He
left others to contend for modes o
faith, and inflame themselves and th
world with endless controversy: it wa
the wiser purpose of his more ennobled
aim, to act up to those clear rules o
conduct which revelation hath gra
ciously prescribed. He possessed by
temper every moral virtue; by religio
every Christian grace. He had a h
manity that melted at every distr
a charity which not only thoug

evil but suspected none. He exercised his profession with a skill and integrity, which nothing could equal but the disinterested motive that animated his labours, or the amiable modesty which accompanied all his virtues. He employed his industry, not to gratify his own desires; no man indulged himself less: not to accumulate useless wealth; no man more disdained so unworthy a pursuit: it was for the decent advancement of his family, for the generous assistance of his friends, for the ready relief of the indigent. How often did he exert his distinguished abilities, yet refuse the reward of them, in defence *of the widow, the fatherless, and of him that had none to help him!* In a word, few have ever passed a more useful, not one a more blameless life; and his whole time was employed either in doing good, or in meditating it. He died on the 6th day of *April*, 1743, in the 76th year of his age, and lies buried under the Cloister of *Lincoln's Inn Chapel.*

MEM. PAT. OPT. MER.

PREFACE.

The Design of the following Treatise is, to awaken in the minds of unthinking men, a serious sense of Religion and a true concern for the interest of their immortal souls: a design, at all times seasonable and necessary, but more especially at this time, when we see such numbers of persons carried away with the immoderate love of pleasure, and such arts invented to gratify their corrupt and vicious inclinations.

Whoever reflects with a due concern, upon the excesses and debaucheries which have overspread this nation, and has any regard for the honour of God and the interest of that holy Religi

which Christ Jesus came down from Heaven to establish upon the earth; will easily be convinced, that all endeavours possible ought to be used, to stem the torrent of wickedness which is broken in upon us, and to prevent the mischievous effects of those public diversions, *which the generality of people are grown so fond of; I mean the* Masquerades *and* Plays. *In those seminaries of vice and irreligion, every thing is contrived to inflame the passions and corrupt the tender minds of young persons: and I am persuaded, they have greatly contributed to that general neglect of God and Religion which is so visible among us.*

Whether any thing that is here offered, will be effectual to draw men off from the pursuit of those deceitful *vanities, I cannot say; but sure I am (if the Scripture is to be the rule of*

our practice, as most undoubtedly it is,) it must be the duty of every one, not only to take care that he gives no encouragement by his example, *to these licentious and ensnaring entertainments, but also to do what in him lies, to dissuade others, especially* those under his care, *from resorting to* places *of so much* danger *and* infection.

It must be confessed, that it is no easy matter to prevail on those who are carried away by the false maxims and practice of a corrupt and deluded world, to renounce their sensual gratifications, for the more refined pleasures of Virtue and Religion; but the difficulty of the work should not discourage the attempt. I have therefore endeavoured, according to my ability, to lay before the reader the advantages attending a good life; in hope, that whoever seriously considers what is

by the great Author of it to be,
solid foundation of our pre-
well as future happiness.
sensible that what I shall offer
n inculcated with much greater
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s which are already extant;
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n done by those small tracts
ve been printed and dispersed
ears, I am encouraged to hope
little Treatise may prove of

I have added some Prayers at the end of this Book, not with an intention to prescribe to any one, but to assist those who are not furnished with better helps; well knowing how important *a duty prayer is, and how highly necessary it is for every good Christian to be frequent in his addresses to the Throne of Grace, if ever he expects the favour of God, and hopes* to find Grace to help him in time of need.

May God of his great goodness give a blessing to these weak endeavours, and render them instrumental to his glory, and the good of souls!

THE

GREAT IMPORTANCE

OF A

RELIGIOUS LIFE.

CHAPTER I.

WHAT must I do to be saved? was a question which the trem bling and astonished jailer put to *Pau* and *Silas*, when he saw the prison doors opened in a miraculous manner a question of the utmost moment an importance, and in which it nearl concerns us all to be well resolved For if there be a Life after the present and we do not die like the *beasts tha perish;* if Death does not put a fina period to our existence; but when thi short Life is ended, we enter upon th *regions of* eternity, and shall be

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are ignorant of the will of God,
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world may think, and how much soever they may applaud their own wisdom in contriving schemes to be rich and great; yet if their chief care and concern is about these things, it is certain they will be found *fools*, when weighed in the balance of true wisdom.

He that is truly wise will consider, that he has a Soul as well as a Body to take care of; a spiritual and immortal substance which can never die; but when enlarged from that prison in which it is now confined, must live for ever, either in happiness or misery. Shall we then be so foolish, as to confine our ambitious pursuits within the narrow limits of this world, without considering what will be the condition of our souls hereafter? Shall we labour and toil for *the meat that perisheth*; and be cold and indifferent about the momentous concerns of eternity? Shall we spare no pains in order to increase our temporal estates, and to lay up *goods for many years*; when we know not, but *this night our souls may be required of us?* And if we have made *no provision* for their everlasting wel-

fare; what will it avail us that we have been rich and great in this world?

The fashion of this world passeth away, and all the glory and splendour of it will, in a little time, have an end. How great then is the folly of that man, and how deplorable will his condition be, who, instead of *seeking the kingdom of God and his righteousness in the first place*, has consumed his days in seeking after the honours and riches of this world, and has worn himself out in the pursuit of those things which are of no value in the sight of God? wretched stupidity! *what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?* Matt. xvi. 26. Time bears no proportion to eternity. The most exquisite pleasures of this life, which at best are but of a short continuance, can never compensate for the loss of that happiness, which *God has prepared for them that love him.* How miserably then will that man be deceived, who places all his hopes and happiness in the poor *and empty* satisfactions of a sensual *life: who looks* no farther than the

present time, and lives as if he care not what became of him hereafter, pro vided he may but enjoy *the pleasure of sin for a season!*

But some, perhaps, may ask, wher is the man so abandoned to folly an madness, as to be content, for the sak of a present short lived happiness, t be miserable for ever hereafter? I wis indeed, there were none such: but, alas there are too many that make this sa choice. Not that any one chooses ev for the sake of evil, or prefers miser before happiness (for a desire of happi ness is inseparable from our nature); bu in the Scripture account of things, h is said to *choose* destruction who walk in the broad way that leads to it. Fo God has been pleased to *set before u Life and Death, Blessing and Cursing* (Deut. xxx. 19.) rewards on the on hand, to encourage our obedience; an punishments on the other, to deter u from sin. As the man therefore, wh obeys the commandments of Go chooses *life;* so he that deliberate transgresses them chooses death: t *death which* God has threatened u

sinner, even death eternal. For the *wages of sin is death*, and he that chooses the one (let his pretences be what they may) must be said to choose the other; because he knows (at least it is his own fault if he does not know) that *God will render to every man according to his deeds: to them, who, by patient continuance in well-doing, seek for glory and honour and immortality; eternal life: but unto them that are contentious and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness; indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish, upon every soul of man that doth evil.* Rom. ii. 6—9.

See, then what wretched folly the sinner is guilty of, (how wise soever he may think himself, and how much soever he may despise the sober part of mankind), when he first enters upon a life of wickedness! for he is then evidencing to all the world, that, *Life* and *Death* being set before him, he has determined his choice to the latter: —A choice so absurd and unaccountable, that, did not experience convince us it is often made, we could hardly

think it possible for a rational creature to be so blind. *O blessed God! hast thou set before us happiness and misery; joys unspeakable and full of glory on the one hand, and torments endless and intolerable on the other! hast thou given us the light of reason to guide us, and superadded that of thy Holy Spirt to illuminate and instruct us; hast thou implanted in our nature a dread of, and aversion for, pain and misery, and an insatiable and never-ceasing thirst after happiness; and is it possible for us, after all this, to be so blind and senseless, such enemies to our own souls, and so regardless of their eternal welfare, as to prefer the dark ways of sin and misery before those blessed paths that lead to the bright regions of bliss and glory!—Alas! such wretched fools are too many among us, who, notwistanding all that thou hast done for us, will not hearken, nor be advised, but run headlong into the ways of sin and destruction.*

This indeed is a melancholy consideration: and what shall we say to awaken men out of this fatal lethargy

and to inspire them with a just sense of their danger? what! but entreat them to consider, that, *unless they repent, they will certainly perish! For the wrath of God is revealed against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men:—and* though *God winked at the time of ignorance;* yet *now he commandeth all men every where to repent; because he hath appointed a day, in which he will judge the world in righteousness, by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead.* Acts xvii. 30, 31. In that awful day, sinners *will in vain call to the mountains and rocks to fall on them, and to hide them from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb.*—For, when *the great day of his wrath is come, who shall* then *be able to stand?*—Rev. vi. 16, 17. Who, indeed, shall be able to stand before the face of an incensed God, and hear him pronounce that dreadful sentence, *Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the Devil and his Angels?*—Ah!

who can bear an eternity of horror and despair? *Who can dwell* with implacable fiends *in everlasting burnings?* Is. xxxiii. 14.

These are considerations of infinite concern, and sufficiently shew us the great necessity of *denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, and living righteously, soberly, and godly, in this present world.* But because the weightiest truths, when their consequences are not immediately felt, are too apt to be disregarded; I shall enlarge a little upon the Great Importance of a Religious Life, by endeavouring to prove these *three* things:

I. That there is no solid happiness to be attained in this life, but in the practice of Religion.

II. That as Religion is the only thing that can make us happy while we live, so there is nothing but a good life can give us any comfortable prospect, when we come to die.

III. That a conscientious observance of the duties of Religion will not only *make us live* happily and die comfortably; but, what is infinitely beyond

all this, will most certainly be rewarded with eternal happiness in the life to come.

First, then, I shall endeavour to prove, *That there is no solid happiness to be attained in this life but in the practice of Religion.*

It has been the great artifice of the Devil, to possess the minds of unthinking men with an opinion that Religion is a sour, morose, ill-natured principle; an enemy to whatever is pleasant and cheerful; and that whoever engages in the practice of it, must renounce all the pleasures and enjoyments of this life. But as the *Devil is the Father of Lies*, it is no wonder that he sets every thing before us in a false and deceiful light: it was by these means he deceived our first unhappy parents; and it is by the same methods he endeavours to betray their too credulous posterity. He is continually representing *Evil as Good, and Good as Evil; putting Darkness for Light, and Light for Darkness.* He knows that *there is such* a beauty and comeliness *in Religion*, as no one can behold it bu

with love and admiration: and therefore he endeavours to draw a veil over its lustre, and to raise in our minds frightful ideas concerning it. And too many, alas! are misled by such false and unjust representations.

But would men be persuaded once to make the experiment; would they forsake the dangerous paths of sin, and walk in the way that leads to everlasting happiness; would they retire from the noise and tumult of a loose and disordered life, and listen to the still voice of reason and Religion; they would quickly find how grossly they have been cheated, and wonder how it was possible they should so long have been deceived. They would soon discover, and then admire, *the Beauty of Holiness*, and be thoroughly convinced that there is no pleasure like that of a good conscience; no real and solid happiness but what results from a life of virtue and holiness. They would then bless the happy change they had made, and would not part with their interest in Heaven for the greatest enjoyments this world could give them

All those empty pleasures which once captivated and ensnared them, would then appear mean and contemptible; and nothing would be thought of any real value, but what sets them forward in the way of salvation.

O happy man! (whosoever thou beest) that hast made this noble trial, and by a true and sincere repentance art restored to the favour and love of God! thou hast *turned away thine eyes from beholding vanity*, and canst now look up with confidence to God, and relish the pleasures of a virtuous life. How is thy mind filled with love and joy and admiration, when thou considerest, that by the grace and goodness of God, thou art rescued out of the jaws of the devouring lion, and art delivered from fear and shame and self-condemnation: the sure and miserable attendants of a guilty conscience!

We may have some idea of the happiness of such a man by considering what is the pleasure of a redeemed captive when restored to his country, *his liberty*, and his friends; or of a *mariner got* safe on shore after a storm,

wherein he was every moment in expectation of being swallowed up by the deep. And yet it must be owned, the comparison falls infinitely short: for what slavery is so great as that of a soul under the bondage and dominion of Sin? or, what are the most terrible dangers of the sea, when compared with those to which the sinner is continually exposed?

But have not some, it may be asked, made trial of Religion, and yet have found no satisfaction therein; as may be concluded from their returning again to their former course of life? It is true, there are some instances (and sad ones they are, God knows) of persons who *after they have been once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and been made partakers of the Holy Ghost, have yet fallen away,* and entered again into a life of sin and debauchery. But has this been owing to a dislike of Religion? by no means; but rather to a want of care in not avoiding the company which has formerly seduced them; or to a forgetfulness, or at least a neglect; of the vows

and resolutions they have made; or, it may be, they have fallen under some violent temptation, which they have not so vigorously resisted as they might and ought to have done. Instances, however, of this kind, I trust are but rare. Whereas on the other hand, how many are there, who having forsaken the company and conversation of the wicked, and, having lamented the folly and madness of their past lives; have, from being the slaves of sin and Satan, become the servants of God? these will tell you from their own experience, that they have found more true peace and satisfaction in conquering one vicious habit, than they ever met with in the most sensual enjoyment; that all their past sinful pleasures yield them now no other fruits, than those bitter ones of shame and remorse: and that in Religion, on the contrary, they find such a spring of comfort continually refreshing their souls, as they would not part with for all this world can possibly give them; that they taste such a pleasure in the service of God, as makes them with holy *David*, desire to dwell

in the house of the Lord all the days of their lives, to behold the fair beauty of the Lord, and to visit his temple; Psalm xxvii. 4. and, like him, esteem it better to *be a door-keeper in the house of the Lord,* one of the meanest of God's servants, *than to dwell in the tents of ungodliness,* amid the delights and pleasures of a wicked and deluded world.

In fact, nothing can give a man so exquisite a satisfaction, as to reflect upon the actions of a well-spent life; to consider that he has made God his friend and secured an interest in the favour of him who is the eternal source and fountain of all good; infinite in mercy and loving-kindness, as well as in his power; not only able, but willing and ready to help and assist him in all difficulties: a Being to whom he may have recourse under every trial and temptation; under the greatest calamities and troubles of life; to whom he may lay open all his wants and infirmities pour forth all his sorrows and afflictions, and may at all times with confidence look up, as being assured that

he has a powerful Intercessor in heaven, *Jesus Christ* the righteous, *in whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins;* Col. i. 14. *and who is able to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them.* Heb. vii. 25. I say, for a man to consider these important truths; to think that he is answering the end of his creation; that he is doing the work for which he was sent into the world; that he is become *a member of Christ, a child of God, and an inheritor of the kingdom of Heaven*—how must such thoughts cheer and refresh his soul with a solid, substantial, and lasting pleasure! in comparison whereof all the vain and empty enjoyments of this world are as nothing.

But then, on the contrary, for a wicked man to reflect, *that the face of the Lord is against them that do evil,* Psalm xiv. 16. and consequently that he is in the number of those against whom God has declared his displeasure; *that instead of working out his Salvation with fear and trembling,* he is *daily heaping up to himself wrath*

against the day of wrath; and though (it may be) he is now *cloathed with purple and fine linen, and fares sumptuously every day;* though he may at present live in all the gaiety and splendour, the pomp and luxury, of a great fortune, yet there will come a time (and, for aught he knows, it may not be many moments off) when he shall be stript of all his pleasures and enjoyments, and want even *a drop of water to cool his tongue:*—surely, such considerations as these must strike the sinner with horror and amazement, and like *Belshazzar* when he saw the *handwriting upon the wall,* make him tremble, even in the midst of his greatest mirth and jollity.

Can a man with such impressions on his mind (and these, or something like these will be sure to haunt the sinner) be said to be happy? Are the stings of conscience, the terrors of an almighty Judge, and the dreadful expectations of God's vengeance, consistent with a state of satisfaction?—Alas! the libertine may flatter himself, and think to deceive others, by putting on an air

gaiety and pleasantness; but, it is certain, his mind can never be long at rest, while he carries about him a faithful monitor, that will be continually upbraiding him for his folly and madness; representing to him the dangers to which he is exposed, and crossing him, as it were in his way, while he is in full pursuit of his unlawful pleasures. And though he may perhaps be able sometimes to silence the voice of this troublesome companion, by mere dint of noise and extravagance; yet when his passions abate (for they cannot always be upon the stretch) and the man grows cool, he will find the upbraidings of his conscience return upon him with the greater violence. The shame and anguish, the horror and confusion, that he will then feel, will infinitely overbalance all the satisfactions he can meet with in the enjoyment of his sinful pleasures.

I own, indeed, this is not the case of every sinner. A man, by a long course of wickedness, may arrive at such an *hardened* state, as to be incapable of *any virtuous* impressions; his soul may

be seared, as it were, with an hot iron, and be fallen into such a deep and fatal lethargy, as nothing perhaps shall be able to awaken it, till it comes to feel the very torments of the damned. But no one, I believe, will think this to be a state of happiness.

The truth is, if we consider a wicked man with respect to this world only, abstractedly from what will be his portion hereafter, we shall find that there are many and great evils to which he is exposed, beside the torments of a guilty conscience. Are not pains and aches, rottenness, and diseases, the natural effects of lust and intemperance? poverty and broken fortunes, the certain consequence of pride and prodigality? Does not passion, and anger, and revenge, frequently expose men to mischievous, and many times, fatal quarrels and contentions? Does not robbery, theft, and murder, bring upon others a shameful and untimely end? how many evils are there in the world, that are the immediate effects of men's vices! *From whence come wars and fightings among you;* says St. James, iv. 1

Come they not hence, even of your lusts that war in your members? and from the same fatal source are derived many of those other evils and calamities which some men labour under. If we trace them to their original, we shall find them to be the natural fruits of lusts and passions; to have proceeded from covetous and ambitious desires, and the gratification of unruly appetites. Indeed, how can it be otherwise, if we consider, *that the curse of the Lord is in the house of the wicked; and that evil pursueth sinners.* Prov. iii. 33. xiii. 21. How can any thing but misery attend *him* who has provoked the anger of an Almighty God?

Let us now consider, what is the lot and portion of good men in this world; and whether the practice of virtue and righteousness is not the most likely way to promote present as well as future happiness, and to make our pilgrimage here on earth a state of tolerable ease and comfort.

Solomon had as much experience of *the pleasures* of the world as ever man *had, and* tried as many ways to make

himself happy as his heart could devise; having *kept nothing from his eyes, that they desired, nor withheld his heart from any joy;* Eccles. ii. 10. and yet when he came to cast up the account, he found this to be the sum of it, *that all was vanity and vexation of spirit.* Accordingly, when he is instructing his son in the ways of true happiness, he advises him to *get wisdom and understanding.* For, *wisdom,* says he, *is the principal thing: therefore get wisdom; and with all thy getting get understanding.* And as an encouragement to do so, he tells him, that *happy is the man that findeth wisdom, and the man that getteth understanding: For, the merchandize of it is better than the merchandize of silver, and the gain thereof than fine gold. She is more precious than rubies, and all the things thou canst desire are not to be compared unto her. Length of days is in her right hand, and in her left hand riches and honour. Her ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace.* Prov. iii. 13, &c. This wisdom and understanding, which he recom

mends as a treasure of so great value, is not *the wisdom of this world* (for that is *foolishness with God*, 1 Cor. iii. 19.) but it is *the wisdom that cometh from above*, which will make us wise unto salvation: the wisdom of living in the fear and love of God, and in a strict obedience to his commandments. *The fear of the Lord*, says he, *is the beginning of wisdom, and the knowledge of the holy is understanding:* Prov. ix. 10. or as it is in *Job*, *Behold the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom; and to depart from evil is understanding*. Job. xxviii. 28.

Behold then the excellency of Religion! it not only secures to us a reversion of endless happiness, but makes our lives at present easy and delightful: the very paths of Religion are pleasant, as well as the end to which they lead. It is true, vice has its present pleasures as well as virtue: but then there is this difference between them; the pleasures of sin, are weak, short-lived, and only varnished over; they *begin and end* almost in the same moment, and can never be purchased but

at the expence of much succeeding trouble, shame, and self condemnation. Whereas those which result from a holy and religious life, are substantial, sincere, steady and secure: they leave no disgust upon the mind; no loathings and dislike: are neither accompanied with shame, nor followed with remorse or sadness: those bitter allays to all sinful gratifications. "We may talk "of pleasures and enjoyments, says a "*Great Prelate* * of our church, but "no man ever truly found them, till "he became acquainted with God, and "was made sensible of his love, and "partaker of his heavenly favours, and "lived in an entire friendship and "communion with him." No, certainly; Religion is the only happiness of a rational creature, the only thing that can give us any true and real satisfaction: all other pleasures are, at best, but short and transitory; but in Religion we find a delight and satisfaction, which is solid, substantial, and

* *Arch. of York, in his Volume of Sermons, p. 501*

lasting; a delight that grows and improves under thought and reflection.

"Whenever (*to use the words of* "*another excellent person*) an action "is good and virtuous, it is not only "natural, but carries with it a felicity "flowing from, and essential to, the "very nature of it. Paternal, con-"jugal, filial affection; are they not "full of delight? Justice, friendship, "beneficence, all the offices of hu-"manity, and the whole train of "virtues; does not the exercise of "them administer the most sincere and "lasting joy? The propensity there "is in us toward them, and the satis-"faction there is in the doing of them, "does in dispositions not debauched, "lead most irresistibly to the practice "of them: we have, when we are "about them, no boding, misgiving "thoughts, no forbidding whispers, no "secret reluctancy. Comfort, com-"placency of mind, and a gratulating "conscience, always accompany such "actions."

What a perpetual source of joy and *consolation* is a good conscience! It

gladdens the heart, cheers and refreshes the soul, and fills the mind with a constant serenity and cheerfulness, which is infinitely to be preferred to the noisy mirth of fools and madmen. He that is possessed of this inestimable jewel, has a treasure greater than all the riches of the *Indies:* a treasure, which he always carries about with him, and which neither the malice of the Devil, nor the wickedness of men can rob him of. And so long as he retains this fund of joy and comfort, (as he always may, unless he is wretchedly wanting to himself) he can never be truly miserable. For a good conscience, as it gives a relish to all our outward enjoyments, so it abates and takes off the edge of the sharpest affliction: and not only enables a man to bear up under present evils, but fortifies him against the dread and apprehension of future ones. It arms him with courage and resolution, and gives him such a firmness and presence of mind, as makes him able to endure the greatest shock. *Solomon* observes, that the wicked flee, *when no man pursueth*; but the righ

teous are bold as a lion. Prov. xxviii. 1. And the Holy *Psalmist* tells us, that a good man *shall not be afraid of any evil tidings; for his heart standeth fast, and believeth in the Lord.* Ps. cxii. 7. *The Lord,* says he, *is my light and my salvation; whom then shall I fear? the Lord is the strength of my life: of whom shall I be afraid?* Ps. xxvii. 1. *Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; for thou art with me, thy rod and thy staff comfort me.* Ps. xxiii. 4. What indeed should *he* fear, whose soul is anchored upon the rock of ages; *who has the God of Jacob for his help; whose hope is in the Lord his God?* Ps. cxlvi. 5. He knows that he is in the hands of a most gracious and merciful Father, and is fully persuaded that *all things shall work together for good to them that love him:* he is assured, that *the eye of the Lord is upon them that fear him; upon them that hope in his mercy to deliver their soul from death, and to keep them alive in famine.* Ps. xxxii. 18, 19. And there-

fore he can rejoice in God, even in the midst of trouble and affliction, when he considers, that as his afflictions come from the hands of a good and gracious Being, who *does not willingly afflict the children of men;* so he knows, that *as the time is short,* they can be of no long continuance, *and* that, if he makes a right use of them, *they will work for him a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.* 2 Cor. iv. 17.

See then the folly and madness of those, *that take not God for their strength; but trust to the multitude of their riches, and strengthen themselves in their wickedness,* Ps. lii. 7. and think by these means to be fortified against the evils of this life!—Alas! there are numberless calamities, from which wealth and power can never shelter us: and therefore if a man withdraws his trust in God, and takes sanctuary in the strength of his wickedness, he will find himself miserably mistaken when the day of adversity comes upon him. The weight of sin superadded to that of temporal evils, is a burthen heavier than any per

son is able to bear. It is certain, whatever the great of this world may think, nothing can alleviate the pressure of worldly troubles but a good life. It is *that* and *that* only, which is a sufficient counterpoise to balance the weight of any severe affliction: nothing else is sufficient to support a man in *the evil days of his pilgrimage*, and to sustain his spirit under the most oppressive calamities of this life. All other experiments, how promising soever, will be found vain and ineffectual. The consciousness of having in some measure lived holily and unblameably, will make him look up with humble assurance to the great Supporter of his being, enable him to see through the darkest clouds of sorrow, and behold with an eye of faith that heavenly country to which he is travelling, and where he hopes shortly to arrive. And this, though it will not wholly remove the afflictions which God is sometimes pleased, for wise and good ends, to send upon some men in *this life*, nor make us insensible of the *pangs that* attend them; yet it will

greatly lessen and enervate their force, and enable us to bear up under them with courage and even cheerfulness. For how strong a consolation must it be for a good man, under bodily pains, or grief of mind, to contemplate a state where there shall be *no more sorrow, no more pain, and where all tears shall be wiped* for ever *from his eyes!* or, if he is under the pressure of want and extreme necessity, how must it support and relieve his sinking spirits to consider, that he has a Father in heaven *who will never leave him nor forsake him,* Heb. xiii. 5. how *much* soever he may at present think fit to deprive him of outward comforts! and that there is no person in the world so great, so prosperous, or so happy, but that (having a little patience) he himself shall be more so!

The sum of what I have said upon this head is so elegantly expressed by the author of a late Essay upon the Omnipresence of God, that, I am persuaded, I shall leave this reflection more strongly upon my reader's mind if I give the words of that unknow

but excellent person: 'How happy, (says he, speaking of the intercourse there is between God and the souls of good Men) 'how happy is an in-
'tellectual being, who by prayer and
'meditation, by virtue and good
'works, opens this communication
'between God and his own soul!
'though the whole creation should
'frown upon him, and all nature look
'black about him, he has this light and
'support within him, that are able to
'cheer his mind and bear him up in
'the midst of all those horrors which
'encompass him. He knows that his
'helper is at hand, and is always
'nearer to him than any thing else can
'be which is capable of annoying or
'terrifying him. In the midst of ca-
'lumny or contempt, he attends to
'that Being, who whispers better things
'within his soul, and whom he looks
'upon as his defender, his glory, and
'*the lifter up of his head.* In his
'deepest solitude and retirement he
'knows that he is in company with the
'*greatest of* Beings; and perceives
'*within himself* such real sensations of

'his presence, as are more delightful, 'than any thing that can be met with 'in the conversation of his *creatures.* 'Even in the hour of death he con- 'siders the pains of his dissolution to 'be nothing else but the breaking down 'of that partition which stands be- 'tween his soul and the sight of that 'Being, who is always present with 'him, and is about to manifest itself 'to him in fulness of joy.

'If we would be thus happy, (to proceed in the words of this pious author) 'and thus sensible of our 'Maker's presence, from the secret 'effect of his mercy and goodness; 'we must keep such a watch over all 'our thoughts, that, in the language of 'the Scripture, *his soul may have* '*pleasure in us;* we must take 'care not to grieve his Holy Spirit, but 'endeavour to make the meditations 'of our hearts always acceptable in his 'sight, that he may delight thus to re- 'side and dwell in us. The light of na- 'ture could direct *Seneca* to this doc- 'trine, in a very remarkable passage 'among his epistles; sacer inest

'*nobis Spiritus, bonorum malorumque* '*Custos et observatur; et quemadmo-* '*dum nos illum tractamus, ita et ille* '*nos.* There is a Holy Spirit residing 'in us, who watches and observes both 'good and evil men, and will treat us 'after the same manner that we treat 'him. But I shall conclude' (says the same author) 'this discourse with 'those more emphatical words in 'Divine Revelation; *If any man love* '*me, he will keep my word, and my Fa-* '*ther will love him, and we will come* '*unto him, and make our abode with* '*him.*'

I have thus far considered the effects of a good life, *first*, as it fills our minds with joy, peace, and comfort, and delivers us from those uneasy reflections which haunt and torment the sinner; and, *secondly*, as it is a means to secure us from those evils, which are the immediate consequences of sin; and supports us under such afflictions as it sometimes pleases God to *send upon* good men in this world. I *shall now* consider it with respect to *some other* advantages it hath above

that of a wicked course of actions: and I trust it will fully appear, that there is nothing so likely to secure a man's happiness in this world, as a strict observance of the precepts and duties of Religion.

St. *Peter* lays it down as an undoubted truth, that whosoever desires to live happily, must live holily. *He that will love life*, says he, *and see good days, let him refrain his tongue from evil, and his lips that they speak no guile; let him eschew evil, and do good.* 1 Pet. iii. 10, 11. And the reason that temporal prosperity is so likely to be the lot and portion of the religious man is, because *the eyes of the Lord are over the righteous, and his ears are open unto their prayers, but the face of the Lord is against them that do evil,* 1 Pet. iii. 12. It is very evident from the whole tenor of the Scriptures, that the providence of God watches over and supports good men in this world. *O haste and see*, says the holy Psalmist, *how gracious the Lord is! blessed is the man that trusteth in him. O fear ye the Lord, ye that are his saints*

for, they that fear him lack nothing. The lions do lack, and suffer hunger; but they who seek the Lord shall want no manner of thing that is good. Ps. xxxiv. 8, 9, 10. How remarkable are the words of the wise son of *Sirach*, to the same purpose! *Look at the generations of old*, says he, *did ever any trust in the Lord, and was confounded? or did any abide in his fear, and was forsaken? or whom did he ever despise that called upon him?* Eccles. ii. 10. Add to this the observation of holy *David; I have been young, and now am old; yet saw I never the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging their bread.* Ps. xxxvii. 25. On the contrary, *I have seen*, says he, *the ungodly in great power, and flourishing like a green bay-tree: I went by, and, lo! he was gone; I sought him, but his place could no where be found*, ver. 35, 36. The contemplation of this watchful providence of God over good men made the devout *Psalmist* resolve, and say, *I will always give thanks unto the Lord; his praise shall ever be in my mouth.* Ps. xxxiv. 1.

It is certain, that God is a being of infinite purity and holiness: and as he must therefore hate iniquity with the utmost abhorrence; so there is no doubt, but a serious and conscientious observance of the duties of Religion will recommend a man to his favour and protection. He that *feeds the fowls of the air, clothes the grass of the field*, and is of a nature so diffusively bountiful, *as to make his sun to rise on the evil, as well as on the good, and sends his rain both on the just and unjust;* will undoubtedly in a more peculiar manner bless the labours of an honest and industrious man, and provide for those that fear him and keep his commandments. I would not be understood to say, that never any wicked man hath prospered, nor any good man been unsuccessful in this world: it frequently pleases God, for wise and good ends, to suffer the righteous to fall into great perplexities and distresses. However, since the Scriptures assure us, that *the Lord will bless the righteous*, and compass him *with favour as with a shield*, Ps.

12. *that wealth and riches shall be in the house of him that feareth the Lord,* Ps. cxii. 3. *and delighteth in his commandments;* Ps. cxii. 1. *that blessings shall be upon his head;* Prov. x. 6. *that the house of the righteous shall stand,* xii. 7. *and the tabernacle of the upright shall flourish;* xiv. 11. *that it shall be well with them that fear God:* Eccles. viii. 12. and, in short, that *Godliness hath the promise of the life that now is,* as well as *of that which is to come;* 1 Tim. iv. 8. we may certainly conclude, that a strict observance of the duties of the Christian Religion, is the most likely way a man can take to thrive and prosper in the world, and to make his life comfortable and happy.

Of this truth we may be convinced not only from the testimony of Scripture, but from the reason and nature of things. For, let any one consider whether he who is just and true in all his dealings; honest and sincere in all his professions; and faithful to his word and promises; who is diligent and industrious in his calling; who

makes it his constant rule to do to all men as he would they should do to him; and is so far from endeavouring to over-reach and defraud his neighbour, that he chooses rather to forego the greatest gain, than purchase it at the expence of the least injustice—I say, it is impossible for any person to reflect and not acknowledge, it is much more probable that such a man should enlarge his fortune in the world, than he who acts the very reverse, that practises all the arts of cheating and lying, of over-reaching and circumvention, and stoops to every thing, how base and dishonest soever, which he thinks will turn to his present profit; that considers not so much how honest and upright his actions are, as how profitable; and cares not what his neighbour suffers by his injustice, if he himself does but get by it. Such a man when he comes to be known (as he will not be able long to conceal himself), will certainly lose his credit and reputation; he will become hated and *despised;* and every person will be *afraid to* have any dealings with him

On the other hand, the honest and upright man (beside the blessing of God, which he cannot fail of) will be sure to meet with the love and esteem of all that know him: he will have few, if any enemies; but many friends, and those some of the wisest and best of men; who will be always ready to assist him, and glad of every opportunity of promoting his interest and happiness.

2. Another great blessing of Life, and which gives a relish to all other enjoyments, is *Health.* And who is more likely to obtain this blessing than the religious man? for will not temperance, sobriety, and virtue (duties which he constantly practises) conduce more to a sound and vigorous constitution of body, than surfeiting and drunkenness, lust and intemperance? the mischievous effects of which are too visible to be denied. *Who hath woe?* (said Solomon) *who hath sorrow? who hath contentions? who hath babbling? who hath wounds without cause? who hath redness of eyes? They that tarry long at the wine, they that* go to seek mixed *wine.* Prov. xxiii. 29, 30. What pains

and diseases have some men brought upon themselves, merely by their excesses and debaucheries! diseases, which have not terminated with their own lives, but have been entailed upon their unhappy posterity! and how can it be otherwise, unless it should please God to change the nature of things? for, if men will run into those excesses which inflame and corrupt their blood: it is no wonder that gout, or dropsy, or some more immediately fatal distemper, should proceed from such disorders. And when a vicious or debauched parent has brought rottenness into his own bones; though the children may be free from the vices of their father, yet they frequently feel all their lives the mischievous effects of his transgressions.

3. Again: *a cheerful and contented mind* is another great blessing of Life; for, without it, nothing in this world can make us happy. And by what means shall a man obtain this desirable disposition, but by the practice of Religion? *That* will teach him to resign his will to God, to submit to all t

dispensations of his providence, a
to be patient and easy, cheerful a
satisfied, under every disappointme
and trouble he may meet with;
knowing that God is the sovereign d
poser of all things; a being of infini
goodness, kindness, and love; that
does not willingly afflict the children
men, but makes *every thing work t*
gether for good to them that love hi
And how quiet, easy, and contente
must such a man be under all events! F
Has learned, with St. *Paul, how to abou*
and how to want: and as he is n
puffed up with the one, so neither is l
cast down, when it pleases God to ser
the other; but goes through the worl
with a calm, even, and contented min
undisturbed by that inquietude, imp
tience, and discontent, from which
proud, envious, and ambitious man
seldom, if ever, free.

4. *Peace* is another great blessin
highly conducive to the happiness
Life: and to this the religious man h
the justest claim. He considers, tha
if God so loved us, as to send his S
to be the propitiation for our sins,

ought also to love one another; 1 John iv. 10. 11. and therefore he is an enemy to no man, but kind and good-natured and obliging to all; and, if any person is so unreasonable as to reward him *evil for good,* (as the Psalmist complains some had done to himself) yet, in imitation of his blessed Saviour, whose example he continually sets before him, he does *good to them that hate him, and prays for them that despitefully use him, and persecute him.* Matt. v. 44. *When he is reviled, he reviles not again: when he suffers, he threatens not, but committeth himself to him that judgeth righteously.* 1 Pet. ii. 23. He resolves, as St. *Paul* advises, *to put away all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil-speaking, with all malice;* Eph. iv. 31. and endeavours to attain that *wisdom* which is *from above,* which is *first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits.* Jam. iii. 17. *This principle* of love, and charity and good will to mankind, as it renders the mind quiet and easy, calm

composed; so it makes a man not only happy in himself, but a blessing and comfort to all about him; and consequently attracts the love, esteem, and admiration, of all those that see and feel the kind and benign influence of so divine a temper. *Great peace*, says the *Psalmist, have they which love thy Law, and nothing shall offend them.* Ps. cxix. 165. And the *Prophet* assures us, *That the work of righteousness shall be peace; and the effects of righteousness, quietness and assurance for ever.* Is. xxxii. 17.

But now, on the other hand, the life of an angry and revengeful man is all storm and tempest: he is *like a troubled sea when it cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt.* Is. lvii. 29. He is a stranger to peace, and all the blessed fruits and effects of it: for, where *envying and strife is, there is confusion and every evil work.* James iii. 16. His mind is continually restless and uneasy, agitated to and fro with the violent force of unruly passions, which lead him on from one evil to another, and frequently hurry him

into those that are of the most mischievous consequence. What misery and torment must a man feel, who is possessed with a spirit so directly contrary to that of the Gospel! how little can he taste of the true happiness of Life, whose mind is always discordant and out of tune! he may perhaps *possess* a plentiful share of the good things of this world, but can have very little enjoyment: for what comfort can he find from any thing, who has no peace in his own mind; who is at enmity with himself, and with almost every one else, and is capable of being put out of humour by every trifling, cross accident? Is it possible for a man of such a temper to be happy, even in the midst of the greatest prosperity? No, certainly: it is the meek spirited, that our Saviour hath pronounced *blessed: they shall inherit the earth, and be refreshed,* as the *Psalmist* speaks, *in the multitude of peace,* Matt. v. 5. and shall find a real comfort in whatever they possess; which, though it should happen to be but little, *yet, being* enjoyed in peace and quiet *and with* a contented mind, will ur

doubtedly yield them a much greater and truer satisfaction than a man of a contrary disposition can reap from large possessions and ample revenues.

5. I shall mention but one advantage more which a good man has above a wicked one as to this world; and that is, in respect of *dutiful and obedient children:* which is allowed by all to be a great blessing in itself, and is what the former has much more reason to expect and hope for, than the latter. For, if it pleases God to bless a good man with children, he begins very early to instil into their tender minds the principles of virtue and Religion; he teaches them to *remember their Creator in the days of their youth;* and brings them up in the fear and admonition of the Lord. He sets before them, in his own conduct, the example of a holy and religious Life: and endeavours to wean them from the pride and vanity of the world, and from those hurtful lusts and passions, which *tend only to* make them miserable both *here and* hereafter. He instructs them

profitable, which will give them a right understanding of themselves and of their duty; and make them wise unto salvation. When the grace of God co-operates with these endeavours: (as it will not fail to do), what comfortable hopes may not such a parent entertain of reaping the happy fruits of all his labours; instead of looking upon his children with grief and trouble, and having his grey hairs, by their means, brought down with sorrow to the grave; how much rather may he expect to behold them with pleasure and delight, when he sees them as so many *olive-branches round about his table*, fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge and love of God?

There is no person, I believe, but will allow, that this is the most likely way a man can take to be happy in his children. And though it should not prove effectual, (for success is not in our own power); yet of this he may be assured, that his pious and sincere endeavours to train up his children in a *sober, honest*, and religious course of *Life, will* certainly recommend him to

the favour and love of God; as is manifest from the great regard God expressed for *Abraham* on this very account. *And the Lord said, shall I hide from Abraham that thing which I do: seing that Abraham shall surely become a great and mighty nation, and all the nations of the earth shall be blessed in him? For I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord, to do justice and judgment: that the Lord may bring upon Abraham that which he hath spoken of him.* Gen. xviii. 17, 18, 19. This is a great encouragement to parents, to be very careful in the education of their children: they are making provision for their own happiness, at the same time that they are endeavouring to secure that of their children. But, should they be disappointed in these their pious endeavours; they are laying up in store a good foundation of comfort, to themselves at least, against the day of trouble; I mean, if it should please God that they should live to see their chil-

dren wicked and miserable, notwithstanding all the means they shall have used to make them otherwise; for they will then have the consolation to reflect that they are clear from the guilt of their children's sins; and will be free from those bitter self-reproaches that a wicked man must feel, who sees his children ruined by those vices and follies, which his example hath taught them, or his carelessness and neglect occasioned them to fall into. Bitter reproaches, I say, those must undoubtedly be, which such a parent will make to himself, when he considers, that he has his children's sins, as well as his own, to account for; and applies to himself, (as he justly may) those dreadful words which God spake to the prophet *Ezekiel: When I say unto the wicked, thou shalt surely die, and thou givest him not warning, nor speakest to warn the wicked from his wicked way, to save his life; the same wicked man shall die in his iniquity; but his blood will I require at thy hands.* Ezek. iii. 18. O terrible words of most just judgment! How dreadful

must they sound in the ears of a wicked parent, whose children have perished through his fault!

I have now considered some of those duties to which Religion obliges us; and endeavoured to shew how conducive they are to our temporal happiness: by which, I hope, it sufficiently appears, how much good men have the advantage of the wicked even as to this world. And here I cannot but take notice of the wonderful love of God to mankind, who in order to encourage our obedience to his laws, has annexed a present, as well as future reward, to a good life; and has so interwoven our duty and happiness together, that, while we are discharging our obligations to the one, we are, at the same time, making the best provision for the other.

How much then do they derogate from the honour of God, who represent the precepts of Religion as an unprofitable and unpleasant task! when it is plain to any man that considers things rightly, and is not under the prejudice of his lusts and passions, that

the great design of Religion is to make us happy here, as well as hereafter. Accordingly, all its rules and precepts are so admirably suited to this end, that, would men be persuaded to live in the practice of them, we should find this world a kind of heaven upon earth.

But, had the practice of our duty been ever so irksome and uneasy, and had nothing but trouble and misery been the lot of good men in this world; yet, when we consider, that this life will shortly have an end, and that there is *an eternal weight of glory* reserved in heaven for those that truly love and serve God; what wise man would not prefer the rugged paths of virtue and Religion, which he knows will shortly lead him into an eternity of bliss and happiness, to the ways of sin and wickedness, (how pleasant soever he might find them) where he is in danger every moment of falling into the pit of destruction, and which, he is sure, will, in a little time, bring him *into a place* of endless misery and torment?

But, since there is nothing in Re ligion but what tends to make ou lives easy, cheerful, and contented nothing but what is suitable to our na tures, and agreeable to the dictates o right reason; nothing but what wil ennoble our minds, enlarge our under standings, and inspire us with a gene rous principle of universal love, an charity, and good-will, to mankind in short, since *the commands of Go are not grievous*, but his *yoke is easy and his burthen light;* it manifestl follows, that, as a good life is th highest wisdom, so a wicked one is th extreme of folly and madness.

A PRAYER.

O MOST gracious God! who, out o thy great love and tender regard fo mankind, has set before us life an death, blessing and cursing; and has endued us with a freedom of will, an liberty to choose the one, and avoid *the other;* and, to encourage us t *make a right* choice, hast annexed

present, as well as future reward to our obedience to thy laws, and made the ways of Religion, ways of pleasantness, and all its paths to be peace; O give me wisdom and understanding, that I may not be carried away by the deceitful pleasures of this world; but may see, and know, and choose, the things which make for my peace, and wherein my true and only happiness doth consist.

Convince me more and more, that sin is the greatest of all evils; that guilt and misery are always inseparable: and that there is no other solid and substantial happiness to be attained in this life, but that which results from the testimony of a good conscience, and the hopes of thy favour and acceptance. Grant that these momentous truths may be so deeply impressed upon my mind, that I may make it the sincere endeavour of my whole life to please and obey thee, who art my sovereign good and happiness; the only sure foundation of all my *hopes both* here and hereafter; and in

comparison of whose favour all the honours, riches, and enjoyments of this world, are as nothing.

Deliver me, I beseech thee, from the shame and anguish, the horror and confusion of a guilty conscience; and give me that comfort and complacency of mind, which arises from the consciousness of having been faithful in thy service, and obedient to thy will. And, since thou hast been graciously pleased to make thy service the most perfect freedom, and the practice of our duty so conducive to our present as well as future well-being: O make me steadfast and immoveable in the ways of thy laws, and in the works of thy commandments; that, having faithfully served thee in this life, I may at last be found meet to be a partaker of the inheritance of the saints in light, through the sole merits and intercession of our eternal advocate and mediator Jesus Christ. Amen.

CHAPTER II.

In the foregoing chapter I have endeavoured to shew, that Religion is the only solid foundation of happiness in this world; the only thing that can make us pass the time of our pilgrimage here on earth, with any tolerable ease and satisfaction. I shall now proceed in the next place, to consider the great advantage of a good life, from the comfortable prospect it gives us when we come to die.

This is an advantage peculiar to virtue and Religion; and to which a life of sin and wickedness never pretended. The most which the latter promises its votaries, is to regale their senses for a little time: it gives them no hopes beyond the grave; nor aims at any thing farther than a short lived happiness. *When a wicked man dieth, his expectation shall perish.* Prov. xi. 7. *For what is the hope of the hypocrite, though he hath gained all that this world can give him, when God take*

away his soul? Job xxvii. 8. All enjoyments are then at an end; a those schemes, upon which he h built his happiness wiil vanish a come to nothing. But with a good m it is far otherwise: he looks beyo this present life, and beholds with eye of faith the heavenly *Jerusal* the *city of the living God;* that pl of endless happiness, which God l prepared for them that love him. the hopes and expectations of t happiness, he considers himself *as pilgrim and stranger upon earth;* a is daily endeavouring, through the sistance of God's Holy Spirit, by a l of virtue and righteousness, to beco meet to be a partaker of the inl ritance of the saints in light.

It must indeed be owned, that dea is the great king of terrors; that t dissolution of soul and body, and t thoughts of becoming a prey to the c vouring worms, carries in it somethi very shocking to human nature: yet *a good* man, death appears in a qu *different* view. He considers, that *leave this* world is only to quit a p

of trouble and vexation, of vanity and emptiness: it is to leave *a barren and dry wilderness, where no water is*, for the delightful regions of felicity, where are rivers of pleasure, and a never ceasing spring of endless comfort, which will satisfy the most longing desires of the soul. He considers, that *though this earthly tabernacle is dissolved, yet he has a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens;* and is assured with *Job, that his Redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth: and that though his body be destroyed, yet in* his *flesh* he *shall see God, whom he shall see for* himself, *and* his *eyes shall behold, and not another's*, Job xix. 25, 26, 27.

This is what Religion promises to them, *who, by patient continuance in well-doing, seek for glory, and honour, and immortality*. It is the hopes and expectations of this unspeakable happiness that fortify the mind of a good Christian, and give him a courage and *resolution*, which even death itself shall *not be* able to shake.

It was this that gave holy *David* such a firmness of mind as made him say, *Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of Death, I will fear no evil; for thou art with me: thy rod and thy staff comfort me.* Ps. xxiii. 4. He had made God his portion, his hope, and his trust: *The Lord*, says he, *is my stony rock, and my defence, my Saviour, my God, and my might, in whom I will trust; my buckler, the horn also of my salvation.* Ps. xviii. 1. And though we find him sometimes complaining, *that the sorrows of death had compassed him, and the over-flowings of ungodliness made him afraid; that the pains of Hell came about him, and the snares of death overtook him;* yet the great confidence he had in the goodness and love of God, and the firm belief of a better life after the present, overcame all his fears. *I had fainted*, says he, *but that I verily believe to see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living.* Ps. xxvii. 13.

Religion has been the support of *good men* in all ages. It is certain,

find that he trusts to a broken reed, which will bend under him. There is nothing (as I have observed in the former chapter) but the testimony of a good conscience, and the hopes of the favour and love of God, that is able to bear a man up under the weight and pressure of any great calamity; much less will any thing else be a sufficient support at the hour of death. We shall *then* be stript of all the pleasures and enjoyments of this world; of all those things in which we are now apt to place so great a confidence: and, unless we are fortified *with the shield of faith, and the breast-plate of righteousness;* unless we have *put on the Lord Jesus*, and are cloathed with the robes of his righteousness; we shall be left naked and defenceless, to encounter death with all its terrors. The sinner, how much soever he may now *trust in the multitude of his riches*, and *strengthen himself in his wickedness*, must *then* give up all his dependencies, and descend into the regions of darkness, not only without hope, but (*what is* yet more terrible) with dreadful expectations. Of what infinite mo

ment then is it to all of us so to live, that *when the time appointed for our great change shall come*, we may meet death without fear and horror; and, with an humble confidence, look up to God in an assured hope of his mercy in Christ Jesus!

A good life is indeed the sure pledge of a happy death. As it fills our minds with joy and satisfaction while we live, far surpassing all the pleasures of sensual gratifications; so, when we come to die, it gives us that *peace of God, which passeth all understanding*. When a man in his last hour can look back upon a life well spent, and can say with king *Hezekiah*, *Remember now, O Lord, I beseech thee, how I have walked before thee in truth, and with a perfect heart, and have done that which is good in thy sight;* Isaiah xxxviii. 3. what an unspeakable satisfaction must it be to him; how mild and calm will death *then* appear! and with how little concern will he receive its summons! with what cheerfulness will he *then* take *leave of this* world, and all that was *dear to him* in it! And how contentedly

will he quit his earthly tabernacle when he considers, that he is to exchange it for *a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens!* I say, what an unspeakable comfort must it be to a dying man when he is entering into the *valley of the shadow of death*, to have before him a bright prospect of life and glory; to find the light of God's countenance shining upon his mind, and the comforts of his Holy Spirit cheering and refreshing his soul; to be able to look up to God with a filial confidence, and, with a *hope full of glory and immortality*, to resign his soul into the hands of his Maker; not doubting, but his heavenly Father, whom he has faithfully served in this world, will take care of him, and reward him in the next; and that the same infinite power and goodness, which has carried him safe through this *vale of tears and misery*, will conduct him in his passage to a blessed eternity! Oh, how far more happy must the death of such an one be, than the most *envied state of* the greatest mortal! who *would not* wish *to die the* death of the

hteous, and that his last end may be his! especially,

f we consider, in the next place, the erable condition of a wicked man, en death approaches. But how shall escribe the agonies and convulsions mind, which a despairing sinner la- rs under in his last hour! who can ress the anguish and torment that feels, who is under the terror of th and damnation! *The spirit of a*, says Solomon, *will sustain his in- ity; but a wounded spirit who can ?* Prov. xviii. 14. The most ex-

is going to give an account of a life, which he cannot reflect upon without self-condemnation and remorse, and for which he is justly afraid he shall in a few moments, be consigned to endless misery and torments! how does he blame himself, when his conscience reproaches him for having spent that time insignificantly, or wickedly, which was given him for noble and excellent purposes, that he has neglected the great and important work of his salvation, and been dead to all the calls and invitations of God's Holy Spirit; that, instead of laying up in store a good foundation of hope and comfort against the day of trouble, which is now come upon him; he has heaped unto himself a dreadful load of guilt, which is ready to sink him with its intolerable weight!

O wretched man! what wouldst thou give, were it in thy power to recall those precious moments which thou hast lavished away in sin and vanity! how dost thou wish that thou hadst *known* in time *the things* that belong to *thy peace!* but alas! they are no

hidden from thine eyes; and nothing is left but darkness and despair.

But let us suppose the life of a dying person not to have been so flagrant and vicious as to fill his mind with such black and despairing thoughts; yet, if, upon the review of it in his last hour, he finds in it such a mixture of good and evil, that he is in great doubt and uncertainty concerning his eternal welfare; how sad and disconsolate must his condition even *then* be! and what a dreadful anxiety will he labour under when he considers, that he is leaving this world, and going he knows not whither; that he is just launching out into the boundless ocean of eternity; and that the next moment he may sink into the terrible abyss of endless misery and torment! It is, without all question, a most distressful circumstance to be doubtful concerning an event, of which it so nearly concerns us to have some highly probable assurance.

O that men would be persuaded seriously to think on these things! that they would be wise, and consider their

latter end! Deut. xxxii. 29. and, as the *Psalmist* advises, would *keep innocency, and take heed to the thing that is right! for that,* and that only, *shall bring a man peace at the last.* Ps. xxxvii. 38. And who is there so stupid, that would not wish for such an invaluable blessing? what wise man would not rather submit to the worst that could befall him here in a *short* life, than run the least risk of going out of this world under the terrors of a guilty conscience? It is, (whatever those, who are carried away by their lusts and passions may think) the utmost wisdom of man to prepare for his latter end, by conducting himself according to the will of his great Creator: for, it is certain, (however some may vainly flatter themselves), there is no leaving this world with any tolerable composure, unless our lives have been such, as, through the tender mercies of God and the merits of Christ Jesus, to give us a reasonable hope that we may be found in the number of those whom *our great* Judge shall at the last day *pronounce blessed.* But this can on

be the lot and portion of the righteous; for, how can any one, whose life has been a direct contradiction to the will of God, entertain hopes of his favour? perhaps, when he sees death approaching, he may bewail the folly of his past conduct, and *with strong crying and tears* resolve upon a new course of life, if it should please God to spare him: but, since the Gospel hath no where assured us, that God will accept of a death-bed repentance, or be reconciled to a sinner who (after having lived a wicked and careless life, and been deaf to all the calls and invitations of the Holy Spirit, the threatenings of the Gospel, and the checks of his own conscience) shall at the last, when he is able to gratify his lusts no longer, and begins to fear the sad consequences of his sins, cry out for mercy, and wish that he had been wise in time—I say, since God has no where revealed, that he will accept of any repentance which is not followed by a thorough change and amendment of life, and a sincere obedience to his commandments: and since it is impossible for a dying sinner

to bring forth such fruits of repentance; how precarious must *his* hopes be, that are built upon so uncertain a foundation!

It is true, to repent is all that a man who has led a wicked life can do, when he comes to die; and it would be well, for his own sake, and for the sake of his sorrowful friends and relations, that he would do *this* much, and not go out of the world hardened and insensible: for, who knows how far infinite mercy may be extended? But, surely, it must be the greatest instance of folly and madness, to hazard a matter of such infinite moment upon so uncertain an issue; upon a few broken, confused, and almost despairing sighs and groans; for, if the remorse and horrors, the solemn vows and resolutions of such men should not prove a true godly sorrow; *a repentance to salvation not to be repented of* (as no man can say they certainly will) they are lost and undone to all eternity.

But suppose we could be assured, that a death-bed repentance would be *effectual;* yet who can tell, whether a *man may* have time for that work?

the hour of death? Or, if he could l
certain that a lingering sickness wou
put an end to his days; yet how do
he know that God will then vouchsa
him the grace of repentance? at
without *that* grace it is impossible l
should repent. O how much rath
may such a person have cause to fea
lest God should be so provoked, by h
many wilful refusals to hearken to tl
calls and admonitions of the Ho
Spirit, as to cut short his day of grac
and deliver him over to a hardened ar
reprobate mind.

The Scripture assures us, that the
is a time when men shall call upt
God, and he will not hearken. *B
cause I have called, and ye refused;
have stretched out my hand, and
man regarded; but ye have set
nought all my counsel, and would no
of my reproof; I also will laugh
your calamity; I will mock when you
fear cometh; when your fear cometh
desolation; and your destruction comet
as a whirlwind; when distress and an
guish cometh upon you.* Then sh

swer; they shall seek me early, but they shall not find me: for they that hated knowledge, and did not chuse the fear of the Lord: they would none of my counsel; they despised all my reproof; therefore shall they eat of the fruit of their own way, and be filled with their own devices. Prov. i. 24, &c. The end of the long-suffering and forbearance of God is *to lead men to repentance:* Rom. ii. 4. but if, instead of producing that blessed effect, it only hardens them in their sins, and makes them resolve to go on in their wicked courses, vainly presuming they will repent, when they come to die; how just it may be in God to leave them at their last hour under all the terrors and agonies of a fearful death! *to laugh at their calamity, and to mock when their fear cometh!*

O consider this, all ye that forget God, lest he pluck you away, and there be none to deliver you. Consider it in due time, before it be too late, before the dreadful hour comes upon you; when all opportunities of reconciling yourselves to your offended God, shall be taken from you, and the door

hope shall be for ever shut. Silence the clamour of your passions, and listen to the threatenings of God's holy word, the admonitions of his blessed Spirit, and the checks of your own consciences. Be persuaded to set about the great work of your salvation *to-day, while it is called to day, before the night cometh when no man can work.* Remember, that though you are now, perhaps, in health and strength; in the prime and vigour of your years; surrounded with the pleasures of a great and splendid fortune; yet the time is coming, and (whether you think of it or not) is speedily approaching, when you must take your leave of all that is desirable upon earth. Nothing will *then* stand you in any stead but a good conscience; neither honours, nor riches, nor any thing else that men are now so fond of, will *then* be able to give you one moment's ease, or afford you one comfortable thought. Nothing will *then* avail but the consciousness of having in some measure *answered* the end for which God sent *you into* the world; by having lived in

the fear and love of God, *and in simplicity and godly sincerity having had your conversation in this world.*

It was this that made St. *Paul* desire *to be dissolved and to be with Christ*: for, he had *fought a good fight, and kept the faith.* And therefore he could say with great assurance, when *the time of his departure was at hand, that there was laid up for him a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, should give him at that day.* 2 Tim. iv. 7, 8. And it was this that made a late pious divine* of our church, when he was near his death, utter these remarkable expressions: 'I am entering 'upon my last labour; the Lord gave, 'and is now taking away, blessed be 'the name of the Lord! for, I thank my 'God, I am going without any distrust, 'without the least misgiving, to a place 'of rest, and joy, and everlasting bliss. 'There is no life like a happy death. 'I have endeavoured, even from my 'youth to approve myself a faithful 'servant to my great Master. I have

* Kettlewell. See the Preface to his Five *Discourses published since his Death.*

'taken some pains in writing several 'books; I have seriously considered 'them: and am fully satisfied (looking 'on those about him), that you may 'find in them the way to heaven. The 'Christian duties contained therein 'have been my practice as well as 'study: and now I find the advantage 'of it. And therefore be careful to 'read them often and seriously; and 'live suitably thereunto, that, when 'you come to the condition I am now 'in, you may die with comfort, as you 'see me do. I have some little pain 'indeed; but my pain is nothing so ex-'traordinary as my hopes; for, I have 'earnestly repented of all my sins, and 'verily believe, that, through the tender 'mercies of my God, and the merits of 'my blessed Saviour *Jesus Christ*, I 'shall be carried up into *Abraham*'s 'bosom.' After which, it is said, he made this short prayer. 'I wait, O 'God, for that everlasting rest, which 'I want at present, but shall not long. 'I am ready, when thou my God 'callest for me; yet can stay with pa-'tience till thou pleasest: for thy time

'is the best time, and thy pleasure the 'best pleasure.'

See here the end of a good man! how calm, how serene and comfortable is his death! Is there any thing like *this*, in the case of a wicked man, in the hour of his dissolution? alas! no. If you behold such a person in his last extremity (unless he die hardened and impenitent,) you will hear little else but bitter reflections, sad bewailings, wretched upbraidings of himself, for the folly and madness of his past life, together with despairing sighs and groans, black and dreadful to himself, and very terrible to all about him. May God of his infinite mercy keep every one of us from such a dreadful hour! *and teach us all so to number our days, as to apply our hearts unto wisdom;* unto that *true* wisdom, which will make us wise unto salvation; fill our minds with comfort and satisfaction, while we live; and, what is of infinitely more value, give us, when we come to die, that *peace of God which* passeth all understanding, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

A PRAYER.

O MOST great and mighty God! in whose hands are the issues of life and death! Thou orderest all things by thy infinite power and wisdom, and hast appointed for all men once to die; and, after this short life shall be ended, hast, of thy infinite goodness, provided for thy faithful servants a state of endless bliss and happiness. O! make me truly sensible of the frailty and uncertainty of my life; and teach me so to number my days, that I may apply my heart unto true wisdom. Let not death ever surprize me unawares, nor find me in a state unprovided. But grant that I may live in such a constant preparation for my latter end, that, how suddenly soever thou shalt be pleased to take me out of this world, I may be found ready and prepared for that great account, which I must one day give *before* the judgment-seat of Christ. *Enable* me, by the assistance of thy *grace* and Holy Spirit, to finish the great

work of my salvation before the night comes when no man can work, and to lay a good foundation of hope and comfort against the hour of my death: that when the time of my departure shall come, I may look back upon a well spent life with joy and comfort, and may meet death without fear.

Look upon me, O most gracious God, when the time of my dissolution draws nigh, as a reconciled Father in Christ Jesus. Speak peace unto my conscience, and say unto my soul, 'I 'am the God of thy salvation.' Let not the cruel enemy of souls affright me with his terrors; but give thy holy angels charge over me, to keep me out of his hands; and let the comforts of thy Holy Spirit cheer and cherish my soul in its passage through this vale of tears and misery, to a happy eternity.

O Lord! leave me not to myself in that time of distress, when I shall stand in so much need of thee. Confirm my faith; support me in my dying agonies; *and forsake* me not when my strength

faileth. Let thy merciful ears, O G
be then open to my prayers; and sp
me, O Lord most holy, O God m
mighty, O holy and merciful Savio
thou most worthy judge eternal! su
me not at my last hour, through
pains of body, or weakness of m
to renounce my dependence upon th
But grant, O merciful Father, that, w
an humble reliance on thy mercies,
the infinite merits of my dear
deemer, and with an entire submiss
to thy blessed will, I may cheerf
resign my soul into thy hands, and
be willing, and even desirous, to le
this world, when thou, my God, in
great wisdom, shall see it fitting.

O Lord! let me never be separa
from thee; but grant that my soul m
be so united to thee, who art the full
of all happiness, by the strongest tie
faith, love, and obedience, that, aft
life spent here in thy service, I m
dwell with thee in life everlasting,
be received into those mansions
eternal bliss and glory, which thou h
prepared for them that truly love

fear thee. Grant this, O Lord, through the merits, and for the sake, of thy beloved Son, Jesus Christ, our only Saviour!

CHAPTER III.

HITHERTO I have considered the great advantages of religion, as they respect only our well being in this world, and our going comfortably out of it: but, there are other advantages attending a good life, infinitely beyond all that have been mentioned; namely, that it will entitle us, through the merits of *Christ Jesus, to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled, and that fadeth not away.* I shall endeavour, therefore, to shew, in the last place, that a serious and conscientious observance of the duties of religion, will most certainly be rewarded with eternal happiness in the life to come.

And here I shall not presume so much as to aim at a description of that *exceeding weight of* glory, which God *has reserved* for those that truly love

n. In the Scripture, indeed, the
ries of the other world are repre
nted to us, in condescension to ou
ak capacities, as a *kingdom, and*
own, an eternal kingdom, and
ver fading crown; but the state o
e other world is a state so unknow
us, and so much above our imperfec
nceptions, that we shall never be abl
ly to comprehend it, till we arriv
the actual enjoyment. For, though
know that we shall there see God
d the blessed Jesus, who *loved us*
d gave himself for us, and shall to al

served for them that love him, are such *as neither eye hath seen, nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive.* As this is sufficient for us at present to know in general, concerning this fact, all curious inquiries into the precise nature of the happiness of the next life, will be of small use to us: they may fill our heads with fine speculations, but will signify little to direct our practice. What we are most concerned to know, and in the most explicit manner is, that our sincere obedience to God's commandments will certainly be rewarded with eternal life and happiness. This, indeed, is a matter which it imports us to be well assured of; that we may not be weary of well-doing, but *may run with patience the race that is set before us,* Heb. xii. 1. *and press towards the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus,* Phil. iii. 14.

There are some indeed (and a melancholy reflection it is that there are) *who would* have us believe, that we die *like the* beasts which perish, and th

done, whether it be good or bad. 2 Cor. v. 10. *And then all that are in their graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth: they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation.* John v. 28, 29.

He then who believes the Gospel (as every one must, that lives in the light of it, unless he be wretchedly blinded by his lusts and passions) can never doubt of these two great articles of the Christian religion; *the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting.* The possibility of the former hath been made evident, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead; and the certainty of the latter appears, from the express declarations of God in the Holy Scriptures. Indeed, the whole tenor of the Christian religion sufficiently proves it; every precept of which tends to purify and refine our natures, and to fit and prepare us for the society of saints and angels in *another life.* The *Apostle* assures us, *that God hath not* appointed us to *wrath, but to obtain* salvation by our

Lord Jesus Christ, who died for us, that we should live together with him. Thess. v. 9, 10. And St. John tells us, that *God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, to the end that all that believe in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.* John iii. 16.

If then we believe that God is infinitely just and true, we can never doubt, that at the great day of retribution, *he will render to every man according to his deeds. To them who, by patient continuance in well-doing, seek for glory, and honour, and immortality*; he (who is *truth* itself, and cannot *deceive*) hath promised *eternal life: but to them who are contentious, and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness*; he hath declared that he will pour forth his *indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish, upon every soul of man that doth evil, of the Jew first, and also of the Gentile.* Rom. ii. 6, 7, 8, 9.

Our Saviour, in his exposition of the *parable* of the *tares*, tells us, that at *the end of the world*, the Son of Man

shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity, and shall cast them into a furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth. Matt. xiii. 40, 41, 42. So likewise in his exposition of the parable of the *net*, in the same chapter, he says, that *at the end of the world, the angels shall come forth and sever the wicked from among the just, and shall cast them into the furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth.* Ver. 49, 50. Thus again, we are told by our Saviour, that *when the Son of Man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory, and before him shall be gathered all nations, and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats; and he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left. Then shall he say unto them on his right-hand; come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the beginning of the world:* Matt. xxv.

31, 32, 33, 34. *but to them on the left-hand: depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels.* Ver. 41. *And these shall go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into life eternal.* Ver. 46.

This, as it is a plain and lively description of the awful solemnity of that great and tremendous day, *when the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father, with his angels to judge the quick and the dead;* Matt. xvi. 27. so it is sufficient to convince us, that, though *without holiness no man shall see the Lord,* Heb. xii. 14. yet that every one who believes the Gospel, and sincerely obeys the precepts of it, shall assuredly *enter into the Kingdom of Heaven.* Matt. vii. 21. This was the very purchase of Christ's blood, and the end for which he was contented to be given up into the hands of cruel men, to be buffeted, spit upon, and evil entreated, and at last to suffer a cruel and ignominious death upon the cross. *He gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity*

Tit. ii. 14. *and become the author of eternal salvation to all them that obey him.* Heb. v. 9. *Though he was rich, yet for our sakes he became poor, that we through his poverty might be made rich.* 2 Cor. viii. 9. *He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon him, and with his stripes we are healed.* Isaiah liii. 4.

The redemption of mankind was thought a design worthy the Son of God. The souls of men were of so great a value in his sight that he esteemed nothing too much, or too great, to suffer for their sakes. He saw and pitied our misery, and knew that without a Saviour we must be lost for ever: he therefore condescended so far as to humble himself even to the death upon the cross, for us miserable sinners, who lay in darkness and the shadow of death; that he might make us the children of God, and exalt us to everlasting life. So that though we *were sometimes afar off*, yet being *now made nigh by the blood* of Christ, we *are no more strangers* and foreigners

but fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God. Ephes. ii. 13. 19. And if we are careful to perform our parts, we may assuredly say with St. Paul, that *henceforth there is laid up for us a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give us at that day.* 2 Tim. iv. 8. For we have the promise of him who is *truth* itself, and cannot deceive us, that, if we are *faithful unto death,* he *will give us a crown of life.* Rev. ii. 10.

And what a glorious incitement is this to all men, *to live soberly, righteously, and godlily in this present world!* What can be more effectual to make us *steadfast and unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord,* than to know *that our labour shall not be in vain in the Lord;* 1 Cor. xv. 58. that no good action which we do, shall be lost and fruitless; on the contrary, that in a little time, all our services will be infinitely rewarded: that every grace and virtue which we exercise in this life, and every degree of them, *shall receive* their just recompence *at the resurrection* of the just

and that, if we obey God's laws faithfully and sincerely, we may be assured, that, through the tender mercies of our heavenly Father, and the merits of our Redeemer, we shall be received into a place of everlasting rest and peace; where we shall adore and praise the author of our salvation, and contemplate the glorious perfections of his majesty, with a joy and satisfaction infinitely exceeding all that we can now possibly conceive?

'O blessed time!' (to use the words of Archbishop *Tillotson*) 'when mortality shall be swallowed up of life! 'and death and sorrow shall be no 'more! when we shall be eased of all 'our pains, and resolved of all our 'doubts, and be purged from all our 'sins, and be freed from all our fears, 'and be happy beyond our hopes! and 'have all this happiness secured to 'us beyond the power of time and 'change!'

As these considerations cannot but *at present* fill our hearts *with joy unspeakable*, and excite us continually to *give thanks unto the* Father, which

hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light; who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son; Col. i. 12, 13. so, when we come to have a nearer and more immediate view of the glories of that kingdom which God hath prepared for us; how will our souls break forth into extasies of love and joy! how will it transport us to see him, whom we have loved and faithfully served! to see him not arraigned for a malefactor, not hanging in a shameful manner upon the cross! but to see him, in all his majesty and glory, sitting in a triumphant manner upon his throne, adored by angels and archangels, *thousand thousands ministering unto him, and ten thousand times ten thousand standing before him!* Dan. vii. 10. to see him, I say, not as an angry and incensed judge, but as a merciful Saviour and Redeemer, looking upon his faithful and beloved servants with the tenderest affection, and *receiving* them into the arms of his *everlasting* mercy, with those ravishing

words, *Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world!* Matt. xxv. 34.

But then, on the other hand, with what anguish and despair will the wicked and ungodly behold the dreadful solemnities of that awful day! how will they tremble and be confounded, when the *Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that knew not God, and obey not the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ?* 2 Thess. i. 7, 8. when they shall see the *heavens passing away with a great noise, and the elements melting with fervent heat: the earth also, and the works that are therein burnt up!* 2 Pet. iii. 10. when they shall behold hell open to receive them, and the great Judge of the world with terror in his looks, ready to pronounce that dreadful sentence, *depart from me ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels!* Matt. xxv. 41.

Oh! in what confusion and agonies will those souls be, to whom thou

dreadful words shall then be spoken! how will they *call upon the mountains and rocks to fall on them, and to hide them from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb!* Rev. vi. 16.—But, alas! what will that avail them, when *the great day of his wrath is come!* whither shall they betake themselves, when *both the earth and the heavens shall flee from the presence of the Judge!* Rev. xx. 11. If the Saviour of the world condemns them, who shall intercede in their behalf? if *He*, that once died to purchase their salvation, will not save them (as it is certain he will not save the wicked and impenitent), to whom shall they fly for succour! it will then be too late to cry for mercy, when the time of judgment is come; too late to lament their folly and madness, when the time of working is over: all prayers and entreaties, all tears and repentance, will then be in vain. *He that is unjust* must be *unjust still; and he that is filthy* must be *filthy* still. Rev. xxii. 11. *As the tree* is fallen, so it *must lie* for ever. The time of trial

e day of grace, is ended, *and th*
nains no more sacrifice for sin; b
fiery indignation must *devour the*
eb. x. 26, 27. The dreadful hou
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ose presence alone is *fulness of jo*
d be doomed to those lakes of f
d brimstone, *where the worm di*
t, and the fire is not quenche
ere they must be bound in everla
g chains, and be *day and night*
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the devil and his accursed spi
ose cruel and unrelenting bein

'lashes and stings, the raging anguish
'and horrible despair of their own
'minds, without intermission, without
'pity, and without hope of ever seeing
'an end of that misery, which yet is
'unsupportable for one moment.—
'Could I represent these things to you
'according to the terror of them;
'what effect must they have upon us!
'with what patience could any man
'bear to think of plunging himself into
'this misery; and by his own wilful
'fault and follies endanger his coming
'into this place and state of tor-
'ments!'

Oh! who, indeed, can think of these things without resolving, in good earnest, to flee from the wrath to come, and to secure a happy eternity, by a life of virtue and righteousness! who that believes *the wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the people that forget God;* that considers what it is to dwell in the most exquisite misery and torments to all eternity; who, I say, that considers these truths, will not immediately resolve *to have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness*

such impressions on his mind, should not be filled with so grateful a sense of what God has done for him, as to endeavour, all that in him lies, to act suitably to the infinite love of so merciful a Father, so kind and loving a Saviour!—surely the love of God must constrain us—but, if there be any one so stupid and insensible, as not to be wrought upon by such powerful motives, let him reflect upon *the terrors of the Lord*, and ask himself seriously this important question, Whether he is able to *dwell with everlasting burnings?* Let him think upon that terrible day of the Lord, which, whether he thinks of it or not, will most assuredly come, *when all that are in their graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation;* John v. 28, 29. *when the kings of the earth, and the great men, and the rich men, shall hide themselves in the dens, and in the rocks of the mountains;* and shall say to the

hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb. Rev. vi. 15, 16. Let him revolve in his thoughts the miserable condition of those wretched souls, that are now shut up in the regions of everlasting darkness, among an accursed company of infernal spirits; and then tell me, whether he thinks the short and momentary pleasures of a wicked life, will compensate for endless misery and torments.

There is no one, I believe, who thinks at all, but must think otherwise. But the great misfortune is, that many men are so inflamed by their lusts and passions, that they are seldom cool enough for sober reflections. Yet, if they would be persuaded frequently to meditate upon death and judgment; if they would represent to their minds what a vast disproportion there is between time and eternity, and consider that the pleasures of sin, at best, *are but for a season*, whereas its punishment is endless and intolerable; I say, could men be brought to think of these things with any seriousness, I doubt not but

uch thoughts would in time have the
roper effect, and would so thoroughl
onvince them of the great folly an
anger of sin, as to make them in goo
arnest set about the great work of the
alvation.

'* The judgment to come is a ver
amazing consideration: it is a fea
ful thing to hear of it; but it will b
much more terrible to see it, especiall
to those whose guilt must needs mak
them so heartily concerned in th
dismal consequences of it: and ye
as sure as I stand and you sit her

'world, *Arise, ye dead, and come to* '*judgment!* when the mighty trumpet 'shall sound, and waken the sleepers 'of a thousand years, and summon the 'dispersed parts of the bodies of all 'men, that ever lived, to rally toge- 'ther and take their places! and the 'souls and bodies of men which have 'been so long strangers to one ano- 'ther, shall meet, and be united again, 'to receive the doom due to their 'deeds! what fear shall then surprize 'sinners! and how will they tremble 'at the presence of the great Judge, 'and for the glory of his majesty! how 'will their consciences fly in their faces, 'and their own hearts condemn them 'for their wicked and ungodly lives, 'and even prevent that sentence, which 'yet shall certainly be passed and exe- 'cuted upon them!'

Oh! let me then intreat every one, with all the earnestness that an object of such vast importance requires, frequently and seriously to think upon the tremendous day of judgment, and *the great* account they must then give; *to consider* with themselves how the

stand with respect to another life; and what a dreadful condition they will be in, if they should be called to appear at the *judgment seat of Christ*, before they have made their peace with God, and secured an interest in the merits and intercession of their great Judge. But especially let me persuade those, who, in pursuit of their unlawful pleasures have plunged themselves in sensuality and wickedness, to pause a moment, and consider whither they are going. Let me beg of them as they have any regard for their present peace and happiness, or any value for their precious souls; as they would not leave this world under the terrors and agonies of a guilty conscience, nor appear at the last day, in the presence of God, and angels, and of men, under all the circumstances of horror, shame, and confusion; and, lastly, as they would not then be banished from the presence of God for ever, and be cast into the bottomless pit of destruction, to be there tormented without measure, *and without* end: let me, I say, *prevail upon them not to delay their re-*

pentance one moment, but immediately forsake their evil ways, *and turn unto the Lord their God, who is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness;* Joel ii. 13.-and who has assured us, by his prophet, that *when the wicked man turneth away from his wickedness that he hath committed, and doth that which is lawful and right, he shall save his soul alive.* Ezekiel xviii. 27.

As for those unhappy Christians who have entered upon a good life, and are engaged in the practice of virtue and religion; who make the glory of God, and the salvation of their own souls, and the souls of all others, their great care and concern: I need only to exhort them to go on in their Christian course with courage and resolution; *to hold fast their profession,* Heb. iv. 14. and with an unwearied diligence *to press towards the mark for the prize of the high calling of God, in Christ Jesus;* Phil. iii. 14. nothing doubting but *that he that hath begun a good work in them, will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ.* Phil. i. 6. Go

thful, that has promised: and
ore they may rest assured, that
ill remember and reward *their*
of faith, and labour of love and
ce of hope in our Lord Jesus
t; 1 Thess, i. 3. *and that in due*
they shall reap if they faint not,
vi. 9. *Yet a little while, and he*
hall come will come; Heb. x. 37.
is reward is with him, to give to
man according as his work shall
Rev. xxii. 12. *to him that over-*
h, he will grant to sit with him in
rone; even as he also overcame,
set down with his Father in his

ath, neither sorrow, nor crying; neiher shall there be any more pain; but l tears shall be wiped from their eyes: ev. xxi. 4. and they shall for ever enoy the most perfect and consummate ippiness, and sing eternal *Hallelujahs praise and thanksgiving unto him at sitteth upon the throne, and to the amb for ever and ever.* Amen.

THE CONCLUSION.

If a good life be attended with so any advantages as, I hope, I have rown it is; if it will make us live hapily, die comfortably, and at last entitle us, rough the merits of our Saviour *Jesus hrist*, to an eternal inheritance in that ingdom which he has purchased for us ith his most precious blood; if on the ther hand, guilt be its own punishment this world, and everlasting misery ill most certainly be the lot and porion of the wicked and impenitent in the ext; *what manner* of persons ought we

is faithful, that has promised: and therefore they may rest assured, that he will remember and reward *their work of faith, and labour of love and patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ;* 1 Thess, i. 3. *and that in due season they shall reap if they faint not,* Gal. vi. 9. *Yet a little while, and he that shall come will come;* Heb. x. 37. *and his reward is with him, to give to every man according as his work shall be:* Rev. xxii. 12. *to him that overcometh, he will grant to sit with him in his throne; even as he also overcame, and is set down with his Father in his throne.* Rev. iii. 21.

O happy happy time, for those blessed souls *who have fought the good fight, and kept the faith!* all their labours will then be at an end: that *crown of Life,* Rev. ii. 10. which God hath promised to his faithful servants, will then be bestowed upon them; and they shall be admitted *to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled, and that fadeth not away.* 1 Pet. i. 4. They shall then be *received* into a place of endless bliss *and joy, where there shall be no mo*

death, neither sorrow, nor crying; neither shall there be any more pain; but all tears shall be wiped from their eyes: Rev. xxi. 4. and they shall for ever enjoy the most perfect and consummate happiness, and sing eternal *Hallelujahs of praise and thanksgiving unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and to the Lamb for ever and ever.* Amen.

THE CONCLUSION.

If a good life be attended with so many advantages as, I hope, I have shewn it is; if it will make us live happily, die comfortably, and at last entitle us, through the merits of our Saviour *Jesus Christ*, to an eternal inheritance in that kingdom which he has purchased for us with his most precious blood; if on the other hand, guilt be its own punishment in this world, and everlasting misery will most certainly be the lot and portion of the wicked and impenitent in the next; *what manner* of persons ought we

to be in all our conversation and go
ness! and how *steadfast and immov*
ble should these reflections make us
the ways of God's laws, and in
works of his commandments! with wl
indignation and abhorrence should
look upon sin; and with what spe
should we flee from that dreadful ene
of our souls, which would rob us of c
present as well as future happine
how should the consideration of th
things make us *take heed lest there*
in any of us an evil heart of unbeli
in departing from the living Go
Heb. iii. 12. and how steadfastly shou
we resolve *to have no fellowship w*
the unfruitful works of darkness. I
to walk as *children of light* in the wa
of true piety and holiness; not del
ing for one moment the care of our i
mortal souls! *for the day is far spe*
the night is at hand, and there is
time to be lost. We have a great wc
to do: a work that requires and c
serves our utmost care and diligen
If we perform it well, great will be c
reward in heaven: for, faithful is
that has promised. We may be

sured, that if we are diligent and industrious in this work which God hath assigned to us in this world, *our labour shall not be in vain in the Lord:* for, if *we have our fruit unto holiness, our end will be everlasting life.* But if, instead of *working out our salvation with fear and trembling*, Philip ii. 12. that is, with the greatest care and circumspection, we are negligent and remiss in the service of our great Lord and master *Jesus Christ;* if, instead of *living soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world*, we lead vicious and wicked lives, and spend our days in sin and vanity; miserable will be our condition both here and hereafter. For, although God is a being of infinite goodness and mercy, and is patient and long suffering toward sinners; being *unwilling that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance;* yet we must remember, that he is also infinitely just, and will assuredly vindicate the honour of his laws. All sin and wickedness is an abomination *in his sight: he is of purer eyes than to behold iniquity;* and if his wrath

kindled, yea, but a little, what will become of the wicked and ungodly! nothing but a sincere repentance and amendment of life, will be sufficient to secure them from the vengeance which he hath threatened to pour down upon all obstinate and rebellious sinners: but true repentance will most undoubtedly avert his anger. He hath declared himself to be a *God merciful and gracious, forgiving iniquity, transgression, and sin;* and hath promised pardon to all those who, with hearty repentance and true faith turn unto him. *He hath no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked should turn from his way and live.* In order to assure us of this his great love to mankind, and of his desire to reconcile us to himself, *He hath sent his Son*, his only, his beloved Son, *into the world, to the end that all that believe in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.* John iii. 16.

It hath pleased God, of his infinite *goodness*, to establish a most gracious *covenant* of mercy to mankind through *the mediation* of his own Son: and th

condition on his part of the covenant, namely, the remission of sins, is always ready to be made good, if we fail not on our part, of sincere repentance and a thorough reformation of our lives. Our Saviour hath made a full, perfect, and sufficient sacrifice, oblation, and satisfaction, for the sins of the whole world. He hath suffered a cruel and ignominious death upon the cross, for our sakes; and by his death and sufferings hath purchased this grace for us, that real repentance, and the sincere endeavour of perfect obedience, shall be accepted, instead of innocence: but without this repentance and renewed endeavour of perfect obedience, we shall not be accepted upon any terms. The sacrifice which Christ offered upon the cross, although of infinite value, will be of no avail to us, unless in conformity with his death and resurrection, we die unto sin, and rise again into newness of life. Nothing but a good life will entitle us to the favour and love of God: and, without his favour, we are of all creatures the most miserable. Better b

it been for us never to have be
than to have made God our
leading vicious and wicked li
it then, above all things, be
and constant endeavour to
our friend, who is the best o
the sovereign good and hap
all his creatures; and the fou
foundation of all our comforts
joyments in this life, and o
hopes and expectations in th
is to come. Let us make rel
great business of our lives; a
we have time and opportunit
prepare ourselves, by a life
and righteousness, for that grea
which we must one day give.
the pleasures and vanities of t
which will shortly have an end,
unmindful of the great and m
concerns of eternity.—O etern
amazing are the thoughts of
that considers what it is to live
in a state of endless happ
misery, would not labour a
with all his might, to secure
and avoid the other! Now,
only be secured or avoided

life: for *without holiness no man shall see the Lord.* Prov. xiv. 27. Heaven is prepared for those only who fear God, and live in a strict endeavour to perform a perfect obedience to his will. *There shall in no wise enter into* that holy place *any thing that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie; but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life:* and these are the good and virtuous only, who have kept themselves from the pollutions of this wicked world, and have led a life of piety and renewed obedience towards God, and of love and charity towards their neighbours. To all others, that blessed Lamb of God will declare *he knew them not:* to *the workers of iniquity*, even that merciful and compassionate Saviour will say, *Depart from me.*—Dreadful words! whither shall such wretched souls go when they are bidden to depart from the Saviour of the world:—whither, indeed, but to that dismal place of horror and everlasting misery *prepared for the devil and his angels!*

May God, of his infinite mercy, in

all of us grace to see and fol
things that belong to our eve
peace, *in this our day*, lest they
den from our eyes, and all opp
ties of reconciling ourselves to
fended God be for ever lost
every one of us be persua
hearken to the advice of *Solomon*
God, and keep his commandment
this is the whole duty of man
God shall bring every work int
ment, and every secret thing,
it be good or whether it be evil:—
xiii. 14. And may we always l
remembrance that merciful ca
our blessed Lord and Saviour;
therefore, for ye know neither
nor the hour, wherein the Son
cometh. Matt. xxv. 13.

A PRAYER.

O MOST glorious Lord Go
merciful Father in Christ Jesu
hast prepared for them that lo
such good things as pass man's
standing, and hast promised

eternal life to them who, by patient continuance in well-doing, seek for glory and honour and immortality; give me, I most humbly beseech thee, a firm and unshaken faith in all thy promises; that, being fully persuaded of those important truths which thou hast revealed to us in the Gospel, I may make it the principal care and concern of my whole life to please and obey thee in all things! And, that I may obtain those things which thou dost promise, make me to love that which thou dost command: and grant that, by the assistance of thy Holy Spirit, I may be enabled to persevere in the practice of a holy Life, even to the last moment of my days!

Let the hopes and expectations of that unspeakable happiness hereafter, which thou hast prepared for those who live in obedience to thy commandments, enable me to pass through this vale of tears and misery, with cheerfulness and submission to thy blessed will; and to bear with patience whatever troubles thou, in thy great wisdom, shall see fit to lay upon me.

O Lord! give me a heart
above the vanities and enticeme
this world, and free from all its
tions and defilements. Fix my tho
my hopes, and my desires, upon h
and heavenly things; that, havi
way in view that crown of glory
thou hast promised to thy faithf
vants, I may press toward the ma
the prize of the high calling of C
Christ Jesus. And, being str
ened by thy Grace, and support
thy Holy Spirit, I may run with pa
the race which thou hast set befo
that when the great day of retri
shall come, I may look up to my
merciful Judge with joy and co
and may hear those ravishing
pronounced unto me, *Well done,
good and faithful servant, enter
into the joy of thy Lord.* Gran
O merciful Father, through the
merits, and for the sake, of my e
Advocate and Mediator, Jesus C
Amen.

PRAYERS.

A Morning Prayer for a Family.

O MOST gracious God, and kind Father! we present ourselves before the throne of thy majesty and glory, in all humility of soul and body, acknowledging that we are thy dependent creatures, and that from thy bountiful hand we have received many and exceeding great blessings.

By Thee we were wonderfully made; by thy power we have ever since been preserved; and it is owing to thy great mercy and goodness that we have not been cut off in the midst of our sins, but that thou hast been patient and long-suffering toward us, and hast given us this opportunity of coming into thy presence to renew our praises and acknowledgments to thy Divine Majesty. *O Lord*, thy compassion fails not: b

Thee we have been preserved the ni
past; and to thy goodness we ascr
it, that we are brought in health a
safety to the beginning of this day.

Accept, we humbly pray thee, c
unfeigned thanks for all the mercies a
blessings which thou hast been pleas
to bestow upon us; and pardon,
beseech thee, for the sake of thy S
Christ Jesus, our great unworthiness
what thou hast done for us. Give
such a sense of thy infinite love a
kindness, as may engage us more a
more to love and obey thee, and ma
us afraid of every thing that may
displeasing in thy sight.

O Lord! vouchsafe us such a me
sure of thy grace and Holy Spirit,
may defend us against the snares a
temptations of this wicked world, a
enable us to overcome all our corru
and sinful desires. Give us a true ser
of the inestimable value of our sou
that we may make it the chief conce
of our lives to work out our salvati
with the greatest care and diligenc
and to secure an interest in thy favo
which is better than life itself.

Withdraw our minds from the love of this world, and place them upon heaven and heavenly things. Give us grace to use the enjoyments which thou art pleased to bestow upon us, with temperance, sobriety, and moderation; with an entire trust and dependance on thy fatherly care and good providence; and with a perfect submission to thy blessed will in all things.

O Lord! root out of our hearts all pride and envy; all hatred, malice, and ill-will. Purify our hearts from all censoriousness and uncharitableness, from all lying and slandering, and from whatever else is contrary to a truly Christian spirit: and endue us, we most humbly pray thee, with that meekness and humility which is in thy sight of so great value, and with all those holy and Christian dispositions which thou lovest and delightest in.

Instruct us in all the particulars of our duty which we owe to Thee, our neighbour, and ourselves. Guide us by thy right hand, and conduct us by thy good spirit, through all the business and affairs of this life. Teach us

faithfulness and honesty in
ng that we undertake; and
uch a dread of thy displeasure,
a sense of thy continual pre-
th us, as may guard us by thy
against all the temptations of
ld, the flesh, and the devil.

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morn-
what
ay be
nstead

Be with us, O Lord, this day wherever we go, and in whatsoever we do. Preserve us from the dangers of evil company; from the deceitfulness of our own
s: and more especially from those that are most apt to betray and
are us. Let thy blessing accom-
our honest labours; and
of health,

of our immortal souls, through the merits, and for the sake, of thy dear Son, and our alone Saviour Jesus Christ: for whom our souls adore and praise thy glorious name, and in whose most holy words we sum up our own, and the wants of all mankind, saying, *Our Father*, &c.

This is to be used on a Sunday morning instead of the foregoing paragraph.

Dispose our hearts, O Lord, we humbly beseech thee, to a serious attendance upon thee in all holy duties. Make us duly mindful of all thy sacred institutions, and grant that we may never so far forget the interest of our souls, as to neglect the religious observance of the Christian sabbath. And as thou hast brought us to the beginning of this sacred day; so be thou graciously pleased to take us into thy protection, and to assist us in a right discharge of its duties. Withdraw our minds from the care and business and pleasure of this life, which will shortly have an end; that we may more earnestly attend upon the great concern of that far better life, which is to last for ever. Give us awful though

of thy great majesty, and a live sense of our own wants; that o prayers and praises and all our service may be offered up in such a serio and devout manner, as may render the acceptable in thy sight. Make us a tentive to thy holy word, and to the good instructions that shall this da be given us: and grant that we ma not rest in mere outward performance but, by a right use of thy holy ordinance may grow in grace, and become eve day better Christians, and be so im proved in all virtuous and godly livin that, when this short life shall have a end, we may dwell with thee in life eve lasting, through the merits of thy So and our alone Saviour Jesus Christ; f whom our souls bless and praise the and in whose most holy words we su up our own, and the wants of all ma kind, saying, *Our Father*, &c.

An Evening Prayer for a Family.

O MOST merciful and gracious Lo God! the Creator, Preserver, and

vernor, of the world! thou art infinite in mercy and goodness to all that call upon thee faithfully, and hast promised, that when two or three are gathered together in thy name, thou wilt be in the midst of them. Look down we humbly beseech thee, upon us thy unworthy creatures, who are here assembled before thee, acknowledging that thou art a God greatly to be feared for thy power and justice, greatly to be beloved for thy infinite perfections and goodness, and greatly to be praised for thy bounty and merciful kindness. But as for ourselves, we confess, O Lord, that we are vile and sinful creatures; that we have, in many things acted contrary to thy most holy will, and have neither loved thee, feared thee, nor obeyed thee as we ought. O Lord! if thou shouldest deal with us as we have deserved, we could expect nothing from thee but the severities of thy just wrath and displeasure.

But, O gracious Father, who delightest not in the death of a sinner, look down upon us, we beseech thee, in thy son Christ Jesus; and, for the sake o

meritorious death and sufferings, rdon our many and great transgres- ns of thy holy laws; grant that we y amend whatever we have done iss; and for the time to come may more careful to please thee, and re sincerely devoted to thy service l obedience.

Convince us, O Lord, of the great ly and danger of sin, and make us so aid of offending thee that we may stain from all appearance of evil, and nothing but what is pleasing in thy ht. Let the interest of our immor-

the Devil, who is daily lying in wait to destroy us.

Suffer us not, O merciful God, to be led away by the vain and foolish customs of this world, nor seduced from our duty by the company and example of the wicked and ungodly; but grant that we may make thy laws the rule of all our actions, and faithfully discharge our duty in the several stations wherein thy providence is pleased to place us.

Make us duly mindful that thou art present every where, and privy to our most secret thoughts; that we may never dare to do any thing but what thou approvest, and of which we may not fear to give an account at the great and terrible day of the Lord Jesus. O fit and prepare us for that solemn time by a virtuous and holy life! that when we shall appear before the great Judge of all the world, we may be found in the number of those happy souls, whom he shall then pronounce blessed.

Extend thy mercy, O God, to all *mankind*, and bring them to the light

l knowledge and practice of th
's.

Remove, we humbly beseech thee
errors and corruptions, all division
l dissensions, from every communio
Christians; and grant that the live
those who profess themselves th
ciples of Christ, may be holy an
mplary, and such as are conform
e to the Gospel of our blessed Sa
ur!

Reform all things that are amiss i
se kingdoms. Root out from amon
all irreligion and profaneness, all un
ritableness and animosities! pardo
great and crying sins; avert th
ls that we have deserved; continu

And, O Thou, who art the Father of mercies, and God of all consolation, look down with pity and compassion, upon all thy afflicted servants every where; give them courage and patience, comfort and support; and, in thy good time, a joyful deliverance out of all their troubles!

Send down thy blessings spiritual and temporal upon all our friends and relations. Forgive those that have, at any time, done or wished us evil; and vouchsafe to every one of us, and to all Christians, whatever thou knowest to be best for our temporal and eternal welfare!

And now, O Lord, we desire with all humility of soul and body, to adore thy incomprehensible Majesty, and to praise thy great and glorious name, for all thy manifold mercies vouchsafed to us and all mankind; but, above all, for thy astonishing love in reconciling the world unto thyself by the death and sufferings of thy dear Son.

We bless thee for our creation and *preservation*, for our health, strength, *peace*, and safety; for the comfor

deep sense of thy mercies, that we n
shew forth thy praise not only with
lips, but in our lives, by giving up c
selves to thy service, and by walk
before thee in holiness and righteo
ness all the days of our lives.

We confess, O Lord, that we are
worthy of the least of all thy favo
but, in confidence of thy infinite m
and goodness, we do in great hum
recommend ourselves, our souls, and
dies, and all that belong to us, to th
therly care and good providence; h
bly beseeching thee, who art our
safety and defence, to take us this n
under thy almighty protection, ar

peace in thy eternal kingdom, through the merits, and for the sake of our blessed Saviour and Redeemer Jesus Christ, who hath taught us, when we pray, to say, *Our Father*, &c.

A Morning Prayer for a Person in Private.

O MOST great, most mighty, and most glorious Lord God! look down from the habitation of thy holiness upon me thy unworthy creature, who am come into thy presence to adore thy incomprehensible majesty, and to present before thee the morning sacrifice of my unfeigned praises, for the many and undeserved mercies thou hast bestowed upon me.

O Lord, I acknowledge, that to thee of right belongs eternal honour, glory, praise, and adoration; for thou art the sovereign Lord of heaven and earth, by whom all things were made, and by whose infinite power and goodness they exist and are preserved.

Blessed be thy unspeakable goodness, which hath advanced me to such a degree of being, that I am in some measure capable to know thee, to love thee, to serve thee, and to obey thee.

Blessed be thy name, O Lord, that I was born of Christian parents, and early dedicated to thee by baptism; that by thy grace and goodness I have been preserved to this moment; and that I have in any measure escaped the pollutions of this wicked world.

I bless thee likewise, O Lord, for all thy temporal mercies, and in particular for the refreshments of the night past; for protecting me from all evil accidents, and for raising me up in health and safety to praise thy goodness.

Pardon, O most gracious God, all my unworthy inattentions to the daily instances of thy exceeding kindness and mercy; and vouchsafe me such a sense of thy infinite love, as may inspire me with more vigorous and hearty endeavours to serve thee for the time to come.

O Lord, I acknowledge that I am a

weak and frail creature, and that without thy help I am not able to bear up against the trials and temptations of this world. But since thou hast promised to give thy Holy Spirit to them that ask it; I am emboldened to implore his divine assistance to strengthen my weakness, to help my infirmities, and so to fortify my mind, that I may not be tempted above what I am able to bear, nor seduced from my duty to thee, by the deceitful enticements of the world, the flesh, or the devil.

Root out of my heart, O God, all pride and vain-glory; all bitterness and uncharitableness; all envy, hatred, and malice; and suffer me not to be led away by any of the foolish customs and false maxims of this world. And, O merciful Father, be thou pleased, of thy great goodness, to endue me with that wisdom which is from above, which is first pure, and then peaceable; with that meekness and humility, which is in thy sight of so great price; and with that truly Christian temper and disposition, which thou lovest and delightest in.

Lord, sanctify unto me all thy fa
erly dispensations, and let every thing
ou shalt think fit to send me, prov
blessing and advantage to my sou
ve me grace to be entirely submi
e and contented under all the affli
ns, trials, and disappointments, whic
y wisdom shall judge proper in ord
bring me to thyself; and grant th
every adversity that shall befall m
may be weaned from this world, an
ore closely united unto thee.

Make me always mindful of my ow
ilty; of the shortness and unce
nty of this life; and of the eternity
e next. Give me grace so to live,
shall wish I had done when I con

for my great account, through the merits, of my blessed Saviour and Redeemer Jesus Christ.

This is to be omitted on a Sunday Morning, and what follows may be used instead thereof.

Be with me, O Lord, this day in all places, and upon all occasions. Direct and guide, sanctify and preserve me. Keep me both outwardly in my body, and inwardly in my soul. Let thy blessing accompany all my honest designs and actions; and grant that I may undertake nothing but what is agreeable to thy blessed will. Give unto me, and all that belong to me, such a measure of health, and other temporal blessings, as thou seest best and most fitting for us; but above all things, give us thy grace and favour; that our lives may be holy, our deaths comfortable, and our eternal state happy and glorious with thee, through the merits of thy Son and our alone Saviour, Jesus Christ the righteous; in whose most holy words I sum up my own and the wants of all mankind, saying, *Our Father*, &c.

Upon Sunday Morning, instead of the preceding paragraph, this may be used.

Accept, I beseech thee, O most gracious God, my hearty desires to glorify thee in an especial manner on this day which thou hast peculiarly sanctified for thy worship and service.

I bless thy holy name, O Lord, who by thy Almighty power madest the heavens and the earth and all that therein is, and preservest and governest all that thou hast made.

I bless thee, O Lord, who hath formed man after his own image, enduing him with understanding, reason, and liberty; and made him capable of knowing, of loving, and of enjoying thee his Creator.

Above all, I bless and magnify thy holy name, O Lord, heavenly Father, that thou hast given thine own Son Jesus Christ, for the redemption of mankind; that he took our nature upon him; that he died for our sakes; that he is risen again from the dead; that he ascended into heaven; and that he there sitteth at thy right hand, to make intercession for us; that he hath

made known to us the way to eternal life, enlightening us by his word for our direction, and his Holy Spirit for our assistance.

Blessed be thy holy name, that thou hast appointed this day, not only for a rest from our ordinary labours and employments, but chiefly for a perpetual commemoration of these thy favours, and for giving us stated opportunities for thy worship and service, and for the care of our immortal souls.

My soul desires to bless thee, that thou hast made me a partaker of all these inestimable advantages.

O Lord, prepare my heart for attending upon thee in thy house, and afford me thy gracious assistance in all the parts of thy service.

Let thy word make deep and lasting impressions upon me. Help me diligently to improve all opportunities that shall be afforded me this day, whether public or private, to the glory of thy great name, and the benefit and consolation of my soul, through Jesus Christ my Saviour. *Amen.*

An Evening Prayer for a Person in Private.

Most great and mighty God! thou art the sovereign Lord of heaven and earth, the Creator, the Preserver, and Governor of all things: thou dwellest in that light which no mortal eye can approach; and yet disdainest not to behold the children of men. Look down, I beseech thee, upon me thy unworthy creature, who am come into thy presence, adoring thy majesty, and acknowledging that my dependence is wholly upon thee, who art the Author of my being, and the Foundation of all my hopes, both here and hereafter.

O Lord, I confess that I am a weak and frail creature; my nature is corrupt, and miserably prone to offend thee. I find a law in my members warring against the law in my mind; which I confess with sorrow, hath too often prevailed against me. The pleasures and profits of this world are too apt to engage my affections, and to

make me cold and remiss in the great and important work of my salvation. I have been guilty of manifold neglects and omissions of my duty towards thee, and have not served thee with that purity of intention, with that sincerity of heart, with that fervency of spirit, with that zeal for thy glory, with that care, and diligence, and constancy, that I ought.

O Lord, if thou shouldst be extreme to mark what is done amiss; if thou shouldest call me to a strict account for my life past; how should I be able to stand in thy sight? if thou shouldest deal with me as I have deserved, I could expect nothing but the severities of thy wrath and displeasure: but, O gracious Father, thou hast revealed thyself to the sons of men, as a God merciful and gracious, forgiving the transgressions and iniquities of the repentant sinner; remember then, I beseech thee, thy tender mercies, which have been ever of old, and for the sake and merits of my blessed Saviour, forgive, I humbly pray thee, all the sins and vanities, the follies and in

cretions of my life past. O! reserve not my sins to be punished in the day of thy wrath and displeasure, but blot them out of thy remembrance, that they may never rise up to my confusion here, nor to my condemnation hereafter.

O! enable me, by the assistance of thy grace, to reform whatever thou seest amiss in the temper and disposition of my mind, or in any of the actions of my life, that I may love thee more, and serve thee better, and do thy will with greater care and diligence than I have yet done.

O Lord! keep up in my mind a lively sense of my duty towards thee, and of that great account which I must one day give. Suffer me not, I beseech thee, to fall into a careless and unthinking state, nor to be unmindful of that one thing needful; the salvation of my immortal soul. Make me so sensible of those dreadful threatenings, which thou hast denounced against sinners, that whatever else I leave undone, I may make it my chief care and concern to secure an interest in thy fa-

vour. And, O merciful Father, be thou pleased, of thy great goodness, so to assist my weak and feeble endeavours, that I may not be unsuccessful in a matter of such vast concern.

Root out of my heart, O God, by the powerful efficacy of thy grace, all sinful and corrupt affections. Wean me from the vanities and pleasures of this world; and give me a full conviction of the uncertainty and insufficiency of all things here below. O! let me never seek for happiness in the enjoyments of this life; but grant that I may daily aspire after that eternal and unchangeable state of felicity hereafter, which thou hast reserved for thy faithful servants: to which, I beseech thee, of thy infinite love and mercy to bring me, through the merits, and for the sake, of thy dear son, *Jesus Christ*, our Lord.

Extend thy mercy, O God, to all mankind: in a more particular manner, I pray thee to be gracious to these sinful nations to which I belong; to pardon our great and crying sins; to avert the judgments which we have mos

justly deserved; and to put away from us the spirit of profaneness and infidelity, of malice and uncharitableness; that thou mayest delight to dwell amongst us, and be our God, and we thy people.

Bless and preserve our sovereign lord King *George*, and grant that all who are in authority under him may faithfully endeavour to promote thy glory, and the good and welfare of this Church and Nation.

Look with pity and compassion upon all thy afflicted servants: be a father to the fatherless; heal the sick; supply the wants of the poor and needy; and grant that whatsoever is wanting of outward comforts to any one, may be abundantly made up by the inward consolations of thy Holy Spirit.

Bless all my friends and relations, especially———; reward all who have done me good; forgive all who have done or wished me evil; and vouchsafe to every one of us, from the highest to the lowest, whatever in thy great wisdom thou knowest to be needful both for our souls and bodies.

And now, O most merciful Father, from an humble sense of thy great goodness, I adore and praise thy glorious name, for all the manifestations of thy love and kindness vouchsafed unto me. I bless thee for my being; for my reason, and all the endowments and faculties of my soul and body: for my health, friends, food, and raiment; and all the other comforts and conveniences I enjoy; for thy continual care and watchful providence over me, through the whole course of my life; and particularly, for the preservation and protection of me the day past.

Give me grace, I beseech thee, to make a right improvement of all thy blessings; and be thou graciously pleased to take me, and all that belong to me, this night under the care and protection of thy fatherly providence. Give thy holy angels charge over us; and grant us such refreshment of soul and body as may enable us cheerfully to go through the duties of that station wherein thou hast placed us. And when thou shalt be pleased to remo

us out of this world, O! let us be found in the number of thy faithful servants, through the merits of our blessed Saviour and Redeemer, *Jesus Christ:* for whom my soul doth bless and praise thee, and in whose most holy words I sum up all my wants, saying,

Our Father, &c.

A Prayer which may be added to the daily Evening Prayer on the Lord's Day.

I AGAIN return my most humble and hearty thanks to thee, O Lord my God, for the special blessings of this thy sacred day; that I have been admitted to the great privilege of joining with thy faithful people, in their assemblies for public worship, and to offer up my praises and prayers to thy divine Majesty, in the name of our blessed Redeemer; to hear thy holy word read and preached by the ministers of thy Gospel; and that I have had farther opportunities for employing myself more privately in th

worship and the care of my immortal soul.

I earnestly beseech thee, O Lord, to pardon all the wanderings and disorders of my mind, and whatsoever else thou hast seen amiss in my attendance upon thee: and graciously to accept my sincere, though weak, endeavours to serve thee.

Cause thy word, which I have heard or read, to be imprest upon my heart, and to bring forth the fruits of a holy and religious life.

Help me, by the use of all thy appointed means of grace and salvation, to grow in grace, and in the knowledge of my Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ; fitting me more and more for seeing and enjoying thee my God, and my blessed Redeemer, in the life to come: and grant, that when I shall cease to praise and serve thee with thy saints on earth, I may continue to be so employed with the blessed spirits in heaven.

I heartily beg the same blessings for all my fellow Christians, recommendin

Father, in the words, and through the intercession of Jesus Christ, thy Son, our only Mediator and Advocate.

Our Father, &c.

A Morning Prayer for a Young Person.

O Lord, my heavenly Father, I humbly adore thee, as the Maker and Governor of the world, the Author of my being, the Preserver of my life, and the Giver of every good thing.

I heartily thank thee for the comfortable rest, which I have enjoyed the night past; that thou hast preserved me in safety and raised me up in health.

I bless thee for all thy mercies to me, ever since I came into the world, and especially for those advantages thou hast given me, of being instructed and improved in the knowledge of Thee, the only true God, and of Jesus Christ my Lord.

Grant, O good God! that the sense of thy favours may so deeply affect ir

heart, that I may shew forth my thankfulness, in the whole course of my life. I am thine, O Lord, by creation, by redemption, by my baptism and Christian profession, by all the obligations which thou hast laid upon me: I desire to be thine also by a willing dedication of myself to thee every day of my life, and by a constant and faithful endeavour to approve myself to thee.

I beseech thee, in thy great mercy, through the mediation of my blessed Redeemer, to pardon all my past offences, and to enable me, by thy grace, to discern and to amend whatsoever is amiss in me.

Help me ever to remember the Christian principles, which I have learned, and the pious instructions which have been given me; and never to depart from the good way in which I have been taught to walk.

Incline my heart to all that is good: grant that I may be modest and humble in my carriage and behaviour; chaste and pure in all my thoughts, words, and actions; true and just in all my dealings; respectful and ob

dient to my superiors; innocent and inoffensive in my whole conversation; faithful and diligent in the discharge of all the duties of that state and condition of life, wherein thou hast placed me: and teach me to fear and love thee, my God, above all things; and to do to all others, as I would they should do unto me.

Make me perfectly contented with my condition, and thankful to thee, who hast given me all things necessary for life and godliness. Let thy good providence always take care of me, and let me never place my trust and confidence in any thing but in thee.

Take me, I beseech thee, into thy protection this day; keep me, if it be thy good will, in health and safety. Preserve me from the vanity of my own heart, and from the temptations of the world, the flesh, and the devil. Help me (through a sense of thy constant presence with me, and of the account I am to give unto thee) so to govern all my thoughts, words, and actions that I may reflect upon them with satisfaction at the close of this day.

Let thy blessing be upon every member of this family; upon all my relations and friends; upon all, whom I ought, and whom I desire to pray for.

I humbly commit both myself and them to thee, O my God, in the name of Jesus Christ our Saviour, and in the words which he himself has taught me. *Our Father*, &c.

An Evening Prayer for a Young Person.

Most gracious God, my heavenly Father, as I began, so I desire always to end the day, with blessing thy holy name, and imploring thy favour.

Honour and worship, praise and thanksgiving, are due to thee from every understanding and reasonable creature. I heartily bless thee, that I am in that number whom thou hast made to serve and love thee, and that thou hast moreover revealed thyself to me, by thy Son Jesus Christ my Redeemer, and encouraged me to call upon thee in his name.

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do thou teach me; and wherein I have done amiss, help me to do so no more.

Leave me not, O Lord, at any time to myself, nor in the hands of my spiritual enemies. Preserve me from those circumstances, that would prove a snare or temptation to me. Let thy good Spirit continually enlighten and sanctify my mind; directing and assisting me through the whole course of my life.

Fill me with a sense of my constant and entire dependence upon thee, that I may always commit myself to thy care, and be ever satisfied with thy disposal of me.

Teach me so to number my days, that I may apply my heart to true and heavenly wisdom. Help me to live in a daily preparation for my great change, keeping my conscience void of offence both towards thee, and towards men: and grant that I may be always so employed, as I shall wish I had been when I come to die; that whenever thou shalt think fit to call me out of this world, I may readily and thankfully exchange it for a better.

Take me, I besech thee, into gracious protection this night. P serve me, if it be thy good will, health and safety; and grant me t rest which may refresh my body, a enable me to serve thee cheerfully, b in body and mind, the ensuing day.

I heartily desire the good of all m kind, and pray unto thee for purity, the peace, and the enlar ment of thy holy Church; for thy rection and assistance of all its gov nors and pastors, particularly th under whose guidance I am plac for the welfare of my country; fo blessing upon the King, and all in thority under him? for the relief a comfort of all that are in affliction; all my friends and relations; besee ing thee to hear and to accept me, a all that call upon thee, in the name Jesus Christ, our only Lord and S viour, who hath taught me thus pray: *Our Father*, &c.

THE END.

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